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We track down glamorous baubles for your tree, golden inspiration for your festive table... plus gift ideas galore





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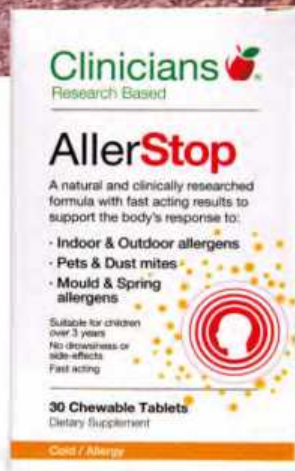


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EDITORIAL

EDITOR - Sally Duggan

ART DIRECTOR - Richard Brunton

DEPUTY EDITOR - Rosemary Barraclough

FOOD EDITOR - Sally Butters

DESIGNER - Sue Thomas

SUB-EDITOR - Jan Chikwell

STYLE CONSULTANT - Tracey Strange Watts

STAFF WRITER/SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR - Andrea Warmington
andrea.warmington@nzhouseandgarden.co.nz, (09) 909 6882

PHOTO EDITOR - Sybille Hetet

ADVERTISING

ADVERTISING MANAGER - Elaine Millar
elaine.millar@fairfaxmags.co.nz, (09) 909 6880

DIRECT ADVERTISING CONSULTANT
Melisa Sinclair

melisa.sinclair@fairfaxmags.co.nz, 0275 796 247

DIRECTORY SALES MANAGER - Niki O'Brien
niki.o'brien@fairfaxmedia.co.nz, 021 630 099

ADVERTISING COORDINATOR - Lee-Anne Mitcheson
lee-anne.mitcheson@fairfaxmedia.co.nz, (09) 374 7759

ADVERTISING AGENCY SALES

Auckland, (09) 970 4000; Wellington, (04) 496 9800; Christchurch, (04) 474 0456
Australia, chriswilliams@fairfaxmedia.com.au, +61 (0) 407 913324

CORPORATE

NORTHERN REGION MANAGER - David Penny

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR - Kate Coughlan

COMMERCIAL MANAGER - Duncan Brough

DISTRIBUTION MANAGER MAGAZINES - Liz Badenborst

PRODUCTION MANAGER - Sara Hirst

DESIGN POOL MANAGER - Olivia Tuck

HOW TO CONTACT US

EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES

Tel (09) 909 6800, fax (09) 909 6802

Editorial email: editor@nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

Street address: 317 New North Rd, Eden Terrace, Auckland 1021

Postal address: PO Box 6341, Wellesley St, Auckland 1141

Story archives/photo sales email: sybille.hetet@fairfaxmags.co.nz

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(Source: Nielsen CMI Q4 2013-Q3 2014)



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ABOVE Sally Duggan.

From the editor

WELCOME TO OUR Christmas issue. It is bright, beautiful and bursting with stories of Kiwi families who are nutty about Christmas. There is, for example, the Harding family (page 36), who put up four themed trees, make their own Christmas puddings and start playing carols before dawn on Christmas Day. There are the Denholms (page 110), who launch themselves into a full-on festivities so early their tree sometimes wilts and needs replacing before the big day. "We just love celebrations!" says Nikki Denholm.

If you're of the eager-beaver Christmas persuasion yourself, you will undoubtedly feel your festive spirit stirring as you flick through this special issue. You'll be inspired by our clever new spins on Kiwi traditions. Even now you will be ordering your ham and planning where to hang a flamingo wreath.

I am well aware, though, that for many Kiwis pre-Christmas excitement comes well wrapped in end-of-year exhaustion. I count myself among their ranks.

"I'm knackered," I said to Nick last night, on my way home after a deadline day at work. "Not in the Christmas mood. It's time for the year to be *over*."

As we crawled down the motorway on-ramp, we talked about 2015. Our daughter got married, my mother had a heart attack. We lost our giant elm trees, hired an architect for a house renovation. There were work dramas, charmed weekends at the bach. It was an ordinary year of family ups and downs.

And then, with uncanny timing, my phone pinged. My daughter had sent a picture of a luscious layered chocolate and strawberry meringue stack. "Christmas dessert?" she wrote.

And it made me realise that of course I don't want to skip Christmas. My festive efforts will be more selective than those of the Denholms and Hardings. But I want it to be a special day: one where we eat delicious food at a pretty table, swap gifts and read greeting cards, get tipsy and soppy and feel blessed. I want to tie my rich, messy year of family life up with a sparkly Christmas bow. And then I want to go to the bach and rest.

"Christmas is a grand finale to the year that was," says Taranaki homeowner Jo Collins in our story on page 88.

Exactly. Have a happy one.

Sally

SALLY DUGGAN

PORTRAIT: BELINDA MERRIE. BACKGROUND: MANJA WACHSMUTH

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BEHIND THE SCENES

Creating the Christmas issue

Sometimes serendipity smiles on a stylist, says Emily Somerville-Ryan, who created the Christmas table settings starting on page 51. Setting out to create a cheerfully tropical outdoor party theme in her own garden, Emily had her heart set on brightening things up with a flock of flamingos and had been wondering where she'd locate them. "Then I walked into The Christmas Store in Newmarket and around the back was a whole stand of flamingos. That tropical setting is my favourite. The garden was looking beautiful and it was lovely to shoot outside – it really got me in the Christmas mood." Emily and her husband Mark have three children, aged from four to eight, so Christmas is an exciting time in the Somerville-Ryan household. Emily likes to have the tree decorated early, with the presents wrapped and waiting underneath. Each year she buys new decorations for the children to unwrap and put on the tree – this year she chose the little white wooden stars from Citta Design that dot the Scandi-style setting on page 57.

THIS PAGE (from top) Stylist Emily Somerville-Ryan puts the finishing touches to our tropical Christmas setting. Behind the scenes at our Christmas cover shoot.



SETTING THE CHRISTMAS TABLE

Meredith Lee of European Antiques turned her home and showroom over to the NZ House & Garden team for the Christmas cover shoot. Not only did we take over her dining table, Meredith kindly let us fossick through her cupboards and use her beautiful Belgian Val Saint Lambert crystal. Meredith also provided the chalky pot moulds she imports from Paris, which sit beautifully against a textured backdrop painted by Greer Clayton.

PHOTOGRAPH BELINDA MERRIE / STYLING RICHARD BRUNTON & SARAH LODS
CREDITS Flowers by Markantonia, white vases from Father Rabbit, stack of plates and napkin from Nest.



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TALKBACK

You picked us!

I can't begin to tell you how thrilled I was to be chosen as a finalist in *NZ House & Garden's* Interior of the Year awards (November issue, page 88). To be included in such a talented group was quite surreal! Big budget or no budget, it was clear all the finalists shared a passion to create real homes, not showhomes. Thank you for loving my "eccentric and eclectic" room (right) and recognising it was created with love (and not awards) in mind.

Angela Kemp, Waikato



Thank you for selecting me as a finalist in your Interior of the Year awards. The phone call from the editor Sally left me shocked and in tears. I thought: my goodness, someone who doesn't know me at all has looked at what I've created and appreciated it. I liked that it was not

just the most expensive, glitzy entries that were chosen; more important, the stories behind them were taken into account. Winning is of course the ultimate goal, but the fact I was selected meant most to me and my confidence!

Juliet Coleman, Cambridge

Our art columnist writes

I was really impressed by Julie Collis' recent show at Northart. I bought a piece and began writing an article on her. Now I see in the magazine that you selected pieces just like the one I bought for the Interior of the Year trophies. And you didn't even ask me! Good selecting, guys.

Warwick Brown, Auckland



DETAIL OF THE MONTH

We're hopelessly smitten with the flamingo theme that's winged its way into our Christmas issue (see pages 51-54 and page 73). And that's not just because flamingos are gloriously pink, a colour that's "having a moment," according to florist Antonia de Vere of Markantonia, but also because they're unabashedly *fun*. See Antonia's pink-powered Christmas arrangements on pages 80 and 81.



#cooknzhhousegarden

I received a subscription to *NZ House & Garden* magazine for my birthday from a son and daughter-in-law. Then the day was really topped off by a Rhubarb & Custard Cream Layered Sponge Cake, lovingly made for me by my daughter and son-in-law from the October issue. It tasted every bit as good as it looked!

Karen Johnston, Nelson

Editor's note: So impressed! If you've cooked something fabulous from the magazine, add the hashtag #cooknzhhousegarden to photos you post on social media and we'll send a prize to our favourite.

Pride of place

NZ House & Garden arrives at my mum's place in Brisbane... She looks forward to it every month!

Selena Simpson, Auckland



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Christmas at the bay

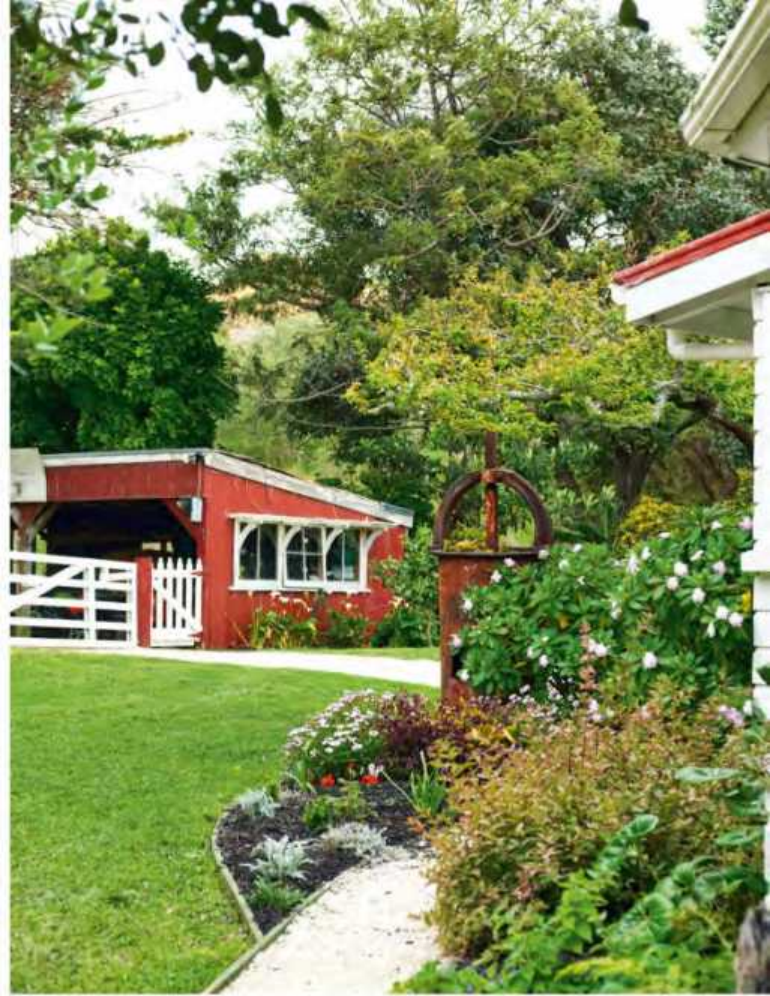
Teenage memories of Waiheke Christmases are just part of a rich family history centred on a 120-year-old villa built on the curve of a private bay

WORDS **SUZANNE McFADDEN** / PHOTOGRAPHS **JANE USSHER**
STYLING SARAH LODS

THESE PAGES Built as a wedding present in 1896, Oakura Bay Villa is now the Waiheke Island home of Barbara Bollard-Breen, her husband Dan and children Cassie, 19, and Jack, 15; in a nod to the house's origins, the arc of pebbles and sand within which it stands is nicknamed "Honeymoon Bay"; the house has an older doppelganger in the next-door Wharetana Bay, built by Belgian settlers the de Wittes in the 1840s.







ONLY, BARBARA BOLLARD-BREEN wishes, the kauri wallboards of her 120-year-old Waiheke villa could speak. This house could rattle off quite a history: built as a wedding gift for the son of the sheriff of Auckland; bought by the wealthy Rothschilds of New York in the 1960s as a safe haven from the threat of nuclear war; inhabited by squatters and shady drug cultivators in the 70s; then rescued by a Kiwi aeronautical engineer, who'd helped to solve NASA's space shuttle problems.

Fortunately, Barbara and her husband Dan know many of the stories and are now creating tales of their own within the high, white walls of Oakura Bay Villa.

Since she was a teenager, Barbara has spent many of her Christmases at this house, bought by her parents, John and Eve Bollard, in 1980. This Christmas is no exception and she's hoping for sunny weather before heading to the ice – to spend five weeks in a tent in Antarctica in her role as a field ecologist. >

THIS PAGE (clockwise from top left) Son Jack with chocolate Labrador Abby and Sky, a huntaway-border collie cross. White shell paths through the garden look magical when illuminated in the moonlight. A wreath of grapevines and manuka on the beach gate, made by family friend and island florist Vicki Roycroft, of Wildflower, who also did all the other wreaths and flowers for this story. A string of seaside Christmas decorations on a beachfront tree. **OPPOSITE** Flotsam and jetsam washed up on the beach, including derelict dinghies, is recycled as garden art by the Breens' indispensable landscaper Mike Smith.



THIS PAGE (clockwise from left) Jack sets off with the dogs, his board and a jaunty towel from Oneroa homewares store Veranda slung over his shoulder; Jack and Dan find the island's best surf at Onetangi, Oneroa and Palm Beach. The swing seat on the verandah is Barbara's favourite spot: "I spend hours with Cassie, talking, drinking iced tea and watching the sea". Dan feeds Cassie, Jack and Barbara with snapper he caught off the beachfront.

OPPOSITE In summer, the Breens dine on one of the villa's four verandahs, depending on the direction of the breeze; the wooden dining table was the last gift to the family from Barbara's late father John; the tablecloth and cushion on the rocker are from Veranda.

Barbara grew up in Seattle, where her Hamilton-born father, John Bollard, worked as a professor of aeronautics and astronautics for 35 years. "He was one of the first New Zealanders involved in the NASA space programme; I spent my childhood around space shuttle launches!" John was famous for devising a way to keep the heat tiles stuck to the shuttles.

In 1955, John took his new American wife, Eve, on a Kiwi honeymoon. After setting off on a dinghy adventure, they became stranded in Waiheke Island's sheltered Oakura Bay – also known locally as Honeymoon Bay. The couple were taken in by the O'Brien family; 25 years later, they returned to the bay and bought the homestead they'd stayed in that night. >







THIS PAGE (clockwise from below) A wreath constructed from trees around the house, including gums brought from Australia by the original O'Brien family and a blue spruce planted by Barbara's American mother Eve. The Breens painted the interior walls white to bring extra light to the villa. An original painting of the bay, given to Barbara's parents by the previous owners, hangs in the wide hallway; the white framed Christmas arrangement is from island prop hire company My Waiheke. **OPPOSITE** The homestead's original kauri door was enhanced with extra glass panes "to bring in more light and add symmetry".



Every summer, the Bollards would bring their four children to New Zealand for holidays and to repair and paint the by then tired, neglected three-bedroomed house and weed the large garden bordering the beach. It was hard work, but Barbara, the youngest sibling, fell in love with it too.

When her mother became ill in 2004, Barbara had no trouble convincing Australian-born Dan to sell the Sydney home they'd renovated. With their two children – Cassie and Jack – they moved in with her parents, who had finally retired to Waiheke.

After her parents passed away, Barbara and Dan vowed to preserve the family home's history and share it with others.

Like the concentric rings of a tree, the kitchen floor reveals that history. At its centre are wide kauri planks from the tiny original kitchen, built in 1896 for newlyweds Laughlin and Norah O'Brien. Around it are matai boards, added as the O'Brien family grew, followed by the narrower strips of recycled kauri that Barbara and Dan laid in 2012 to create a large country-style kitchen.

They also added a glassed-in sunroom, with a water tank cleverly concealed beneath the slate floor, and a mud room, where they tidy up after a day in the garden or vineyard. >





On the sun-drenched headland above the bay, the Breens have 2500 vines of malbec, merlot, syrah and chardonnay. They sell the grapes to nearby Kennedy Point Vineyard, producers of award-winning organic wines. Barbara's dad built a bunker-style wine cellar into the base of the hill.

"There's a special microclimate here," says Dan. "We're protected by the hills in the south and the islands to the west." An olive grove and heritage fruit trees thrive around the garden, which is dotted with intriguing sculptures – rusted skeletons of old machinery unearthed from the farmland. Among them is a horse-powered pug mill, which once prepared the red clay from the valley to make bricks that can still be seen in the house's three fireplaces and outdoor well.

Despite the advice of others, Barbara has kept much of the natural wood throughout the home's interior, including the tongue-and-groove kauri wallboards and the rimu kitchen cabinetry her parents installed in the 1980s. "I love the lines of the wood; it all tells a story." They've also kept the axe marks in the lounge floor, where 1970s squatters chopped kindling.

Barbara and Dan love living by the sea, having met on the Great Barrier Reef, where they worked as marine ecologists. >



DESIGN NOTE

Stylist Sarah Lods has kept this Christmas look simple, in keeping with the relaxed island setting; the formality of the traditional red, white and green palette is offset with rustic texture, in the woven rug, wicker hamper and raw wooden crate supporting the baby pine Christmas tree; the gracious lines of the window surround are echoed in the white framing of the wall arrangement.

THIS PAGE Barbara and Dan replaced the lighting throughout their home with chandeliers and "modern, but period-looking" pendants, hanging low enough from the 3.6m high ceilings for Barbara to change the bulbs; the floor rug, red cushions and striped throw are from Veranda; the hamper from My Waiheke.

OPPOSITE (clockwise from top left) A 1955 wedding portrait of Barbara's parents, John and Eve, graces the hallway; ladder and tablecloth from Veranda. Festive season arrangements by Vicki Roycroft of Wildflower. It's a family tradition to select a Christmas tree from young pines springing up in the valley behind the house.

THIS PAGE Caretakers George and Irma Hood, who looked after the house while the Bollards lived in Seattle, lovingly restored the original brick fireplace and stripped "bright pink paint" off the kauri hutch dresser in the dining area of the kitchen; the bentwood dining chairs are from My Waiheke. **OPPOSITE** (clockwise from top left) Another seasonal tableau; flowers by Wildflower. Barbara's harvest from the vegetable garden will be used to make her favourite rhubarb custard pie. A false ceiling was removed and a claw-foot bath added to bring character back to the bathroom. Removing gib board from the bathroom walls revealed original tongue-and-groove kauri wallboards; the green and blue Turkish towels and small woven baskets are all from Veranda.





The 5ha Waiheke property also includes ownership of a small string of islands they call The Sisters, which the Breens – and their two dogs – enjoy exploring at low tide. The waters teem with sea life; orca, dolphins and stingrays regularly visit the bay and Dan and Jack fish for snapper and kahawai off the front lawn.

Dan and Barbara have worked virtually side by side throughout their careers; they got their doctorates together and, today, they sit desk-to-desk at the Auckland University of Technology, where Dan is a senior research fellow and Barbara is the programme leader for Geospatial Sciences. They catch the 7.15am ferry to the city every day with Jack, 15, who's a student at St Peter's College. Cassie, 19, lives in Auckland during the week, studying art and design at AUT. >



THIS PAGE (from top) On weekends Cassie returns from the city to her light-filled villa bedroom. The Breens look forward to their Christmas Day traditions – opening stockings, eating cinnamon rolls and American baked ham and swimming in the afternoon.

OPPOSITE (clockwise from top left) Barbara could not bear to part with the rimu wardrobes her parents built in the master bedroom. The cherished rocking chair given to Cassie by her grandparents is a favourite reading spot. This statue of the Virgin Mary was made by Maori sculptor Fred Graham for Barbara's mother. Barbara and Dan can lie in bed and watch the sea, and the crazy antics of intoxicated tui, through the master bedroom's French doors.

The senior Breens are currently involved in trailblazing work in 3D mapping using drones. Barbara calls 2016 her “A” year – she's off to work in Antarctica, Australia and Africa, mapping terrain with the help of the drones, which are sometimes tested out on the Oakura Bay beachfront.

To help cover the costs of maintaining their historic villa, the Breen family move out in summer and let other families spend holidays there. The idyllic spot also hosted five weddings last summer. “We feel it should be shared with others,” says Barbara.

While the house is otherwise occupied, the Breens stay on their 10m Davidson yacht, moored out in the bay, and explore the coast. “We're field ecologists, so we're happy being outdoors,” says Barbara. ■

Q&A

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS FLOWER: Has to be the pohutukawa. We have a forest of them hanging from the cliff on the edge of our vineyard. There's always a sea of red. (Barbara)

I HOPE SANTA BRINGS ME: Merino underwear to take to Antarctica. I was going to ask for a personal EPIRB (emergency position-indicating radio beacon), but it was my 50th birthday present from Dan this year. (Barbara)

BEST TIME TO VISIT THE ISLAND IS: After a tropical cyclone; Jack and I pray for northerlies so we can surf. (Dan)

FAVOURITE FAMILY TREASURE: Is my great-great-grandfather “Honest John” Bollard's train pass. He was the MP for Eden (at the turn of the turn of the 20th century) and was given the 18-carat gold mere, which entitled him to free train travel. I wear it on a chain every day; it keeps my ancestors with me. (Barbara)

WE LOVE THIS PART OF NEW ZEALAND BECAUSE OF: Its community. There's a saying on Waiheke that it takes an island to raise a child. People from all corners of the world and diverse cultures come to live here and they become family. (Barbara)

BEST PLACE FOR COFFEE: The Roastery and Cafe at Ostend. Our friends Steve and Jan Burn roast their own coffee beans to make excellent Island Coffee. (Dan)

Barbara Bollard-Breen and Dan Breen





The more the merrier

Nothing is done by halves in *creating a sumptuous, made-from-scratch Christmas* in this elegant home

WORDS **SUE ALLISON** / PHOTOGRAPHS **ELIZABETH GOODALL**

THIS PAGE Candy and Fred Hardings' Christmas dining area, which looks over the lawn to the Avon, has a woodland theme in red and green; the table setting includes a Christmas dinner set by Villeroy & Boch and Waterford crystal tumblers and champagne flutes engraved with scenes from *The Twelve Days of Christmas*.

OPPOSITE Candy greets her grandchildren at the front doors, which were copied from a photo of an apartment entrance in Paris and made by Christchurch joiner Gary Alsop; the children – from left, Sofia, Madelyn and Lachlan – are dressed in their Ralph Lauren Christmas outfits; the wreaths are from Crabtree & Evelyn.



THIS PAGE The entrance foyer should be an experience that sets the tone for the entire house, designer Devin Buchanan tells his clients; Sofia and Madelyn run across the polished marble floor, which was imported from Los Angeles, to the formal living room; the soft duck-egg blue of the hand-painted wallpaper by Paul Montgomery is “the colour of the house,” says Candy; Fred found the antique French wall clock in England.

OPPOSITE (from top) The furniture in the formal sitting room is all by Nancy Corzine, apart from the metal side table, which was made by another American designer Allan Knight; the chandelier is by Schonbek, a member of the Swarovski group. An English rococo mirror sits over the Nancy Corzine Versailles console with gold-leaf detail in the foyer.



*“CHRISTMAS FOR US IS ALL ABOUT
THE FAMILY... THE THING OUR KIDS
WILL REMEMBER WILL BE WAKING TO
THE SOUND OF CHRISTMAS MUSIC”*



CHRISTMAS MAY COME but once a year, but that doesn't mean you can't spin it out for as long as possible. Candy Harding so loves the festive season that she sometimes leaves a tree up for all 12 months.

Candy, who lives with her husband Fred in a Georgian-style home on the banks of the Avon River in Christchurch, decks the halls with trimmings from all over the world and has as many as four themed Christmas trees throughout the house. The most lavish takes her up to two months to assemble, so little wonder she is loath to dismantle it.

"If there was a Mother Christmas it would be Candy," says Fred, who is no Scrooge himself. Even without the trappings of Yuletide, the Merivale house is a tribute to the Hardings' meticulous attention to detail. The couple bought the imposing home four years ago. Built at the turn of the millennium, it was the last house designed by the late John Trengrove.

"As soon as we walked in, we saw it had good characteristics and the potential to add the detail we like," says Fred. >





THIS PAGE (clockwise from left) Candy helps Madelyn, Lachlan and Sofia make gingerbread men. The bear closely observing proceedings came from London's Fortnum & Mason. A Fitz and Floyd goose casserole is part of the Christmas setting.

OPPOSITE Fred and Candy's daughter-in-law Hayley, who has a styling company, Hayley and Co, and helped decorate the house, supervises Sofia with her puzzle while Lachlan plays under Candy's "I Spy" tree, which features glass decorations; specially printed Hardington family Santa sacks from Fortnum & Mason sit in front of a fire surround from Francois & Co in the US.



The look the couple were after was New York elegance. "We go to the US all the time and like the American look and the way they do things," says Candy. "I wanted a Hamptons style of house."

While visiting the Pacific Design Center in West Hollywood, Candy and Fred chanced upon the Nancy Corzine showroom – and specifically, designer Devin Buchanan. "It started with a chair in the master bedroom and the whole house evolved from there," says Candy. Devin has been responsible for much of the interior design – choosing furniture, colours (paint was shipped from the US), wallpaper and soft furnishings. Nancy Corzine furniture was made to measure for the living room, master bedroom and foyer in consultation with local architectural designer Lauren Gasson and builder Nick Griffin.

"The success of a house is in the details," says Candy, who started the renovations by adding cornices and architraves in every room. All the mirrors, including in the bathrooms, have bevelled glass. "You only want to do bevelled glass," she says. "It gives that luxury framed look." >





THIS PAGE (clockwise from right) Lachlan chats with a reindeer under the foyer Christmas tree. Hugo, a golden retriever, ambles from the guest bedroom to the foyer, which features a Richelieu love seat by Nancy Corzine. The bathroom was designed by Emma Morris; the silver-leaved mirror came from England.

OPPOSITE The downstairs guest bedroom is a tribute to Ralph Lauren, from the signature stirrup chandelier to the bed, bedside chest, wallpaper and bedlinen; Lachlan, fittingly dressed in the designer's boyswear label, checks under the bed; the tartan carpet, one of the only things unchanged from the original interior, "goes perfectly," says Candy, who had 1930s photographs of her parents enlarged and framed to fit the theme.

The wallpaper in the entrance hall is hand-painted by Paul Montgomery, the chandeliers are Swarovski, the balustrade in the stairwell handmade by Christchurch Steel and the guest bedroom is entirely Ralph Lauren. Every handle, switch and knob has been carefully chosen. "Candy is very particular," says Fred, who adds that, bar a minor dispute over a drainpipe ("she was right"), they have been on the same page for every decision.

Candy's attention to detail extends to practical considerations: "I use every bit of space." Cases in point: the tiny but perfectly adequate laundry behind the en suite bathroom, a fold-down ironing board "cupboard" and rollaway shoe drawers.

She scours magazines for ideas and is ever-vigilant while on their travels. "Whenever we go overseas, Candy is always taking photographs," says Fred. The new double front door is a copy of one spotted in a Paris apartment.

Candy has made a "children's dream room" for their four grandchildren. "I've always loved children's things and I wanted it to be a story," she says. Gingham, stripes and animal patterns are a cheerful backdrop for a menagerie of soft toys, nursery rhyme prints and shelves lined with books, Candy's precious original edition of *The Magic Faraway Tree* among them. The wardrobe, which the children raid for parties, is packed with diminutive haute couture dresses and Disney outfits. >





THIS PAGE (clockwise from above) Fred wanted panelling in the master bedroom, which was fitted out and decorated by Devin Buchanan; the walnut bed is by Nancy Corzine, as is the Richelieu bench seat, to match the bedhead; the side lights are Ralph Lauren. All the linen throughout the home is Ralph Lauren. A Bianca Lorente bedspread picks up the soft blue of the rustic French armoire, also by Nancy Corzine, where Candy stores her blankets and linen: "Even the shelves are solid timber and beautifully finished," she says. >



THIS PAGE Bronwyn Thoms of Plane Tree in Christchurch designed the armchair and footstool in Mokum fabric; it sits in a sunny alcove at the top of the stairs; the floor lamp is by Ralph Lauren and the lacquered cabinet, a replica of one in Nancy Corzine's own house in the Hamptons, contains Candy's collection of dolls and decorative teapots as well as books.





THIS PAGE (clockwise from right) The urns were imported from Haddonstone in the UK. Richard Fowler Landscaping did the paving, steps and stonework. The gate leads to a jetty where the family feed the ducks or set off for canoeing trips.

OPPOSITE (clockwise from top left) Madelyn in the children's room, which is equipped with a wide range of books and toys. The chandelier is a French antique that was shipped to New Zealand hanging on a hook in a big wooden crate. Candy bought Charlie Bear lion from Fortnum & Mason in London.

"It's fun and just takes a bit of extra effort," says Candy. "Too often mothers make rooms for themselves, not for the children."

When their own offspring, Natalie and James, were small, the Hardings spent three years in Michigan, where Fred was studying. Just as Candy likes the American style of furnishing, she enjoyed their fervour for festivities. "We loved our Christmases in America." She has transported that enthusiasm back home, along with many of the physical trappings.

"Christmas for us is all about family," says Candy, who describes their Christmas as very traditional. One tradition is that Fred cooks the Christmas dinner. "If you saw Fred's Christmas dinner, you would be staggered. He's a great cook and he goes to town." >





Q&A

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS RITUAL: Setting up the Christmas stockings for the children. Finding my own as a child is such a happy memory and it gives me as much pleasure doing the same for my own children and grandchildren.

ON BOXING DAY WE WILL BE: Having a picnic in the front garden by the river.

BEST SHOP: Ballantynes – they have one of the best Christmas shops in the world.

BEST PIECE OF ADVICE: Trust your instincts and make sure the designer or architect does what you want.

BEST FIND: Electrician Pete Smith and his sidekick Dale. They are my knights in shining armour.

BRAVEST DECISION WE MADE: Using hand-painted wallpaper.

THE THING WE WANT TO CHANGE NEXT: The kitchen – we are designing an American-style one with Devin Buchanan.

Candy Harding

THIS PAGE The Hardings' house viewed from the river; it's surrounded by a formal garden designed by Ben McMaster of Inside Out Design.

Fred starts preparing the meal the night before and then gets up before dawn and turns on the music. "The thing our kids will remember will be waking to the sound of Christmas music through the house."

Candy makes her own Christmas cakes, plum puddings in bags and a legendary brandy sauce using whipped egg whites. "I don't believe in buying anything."

The family, which includes Hugo, their elderly golden retriever, gather mid-morning and start the celebrations with bubbly and nibbles while the children open their stockings. "Candy loves Christmas and these kids are spoilt rotten," says Fred. Dinner is at 1pm and the afternoon is spent playing games on the lawn by the river. The leftovers last for days.

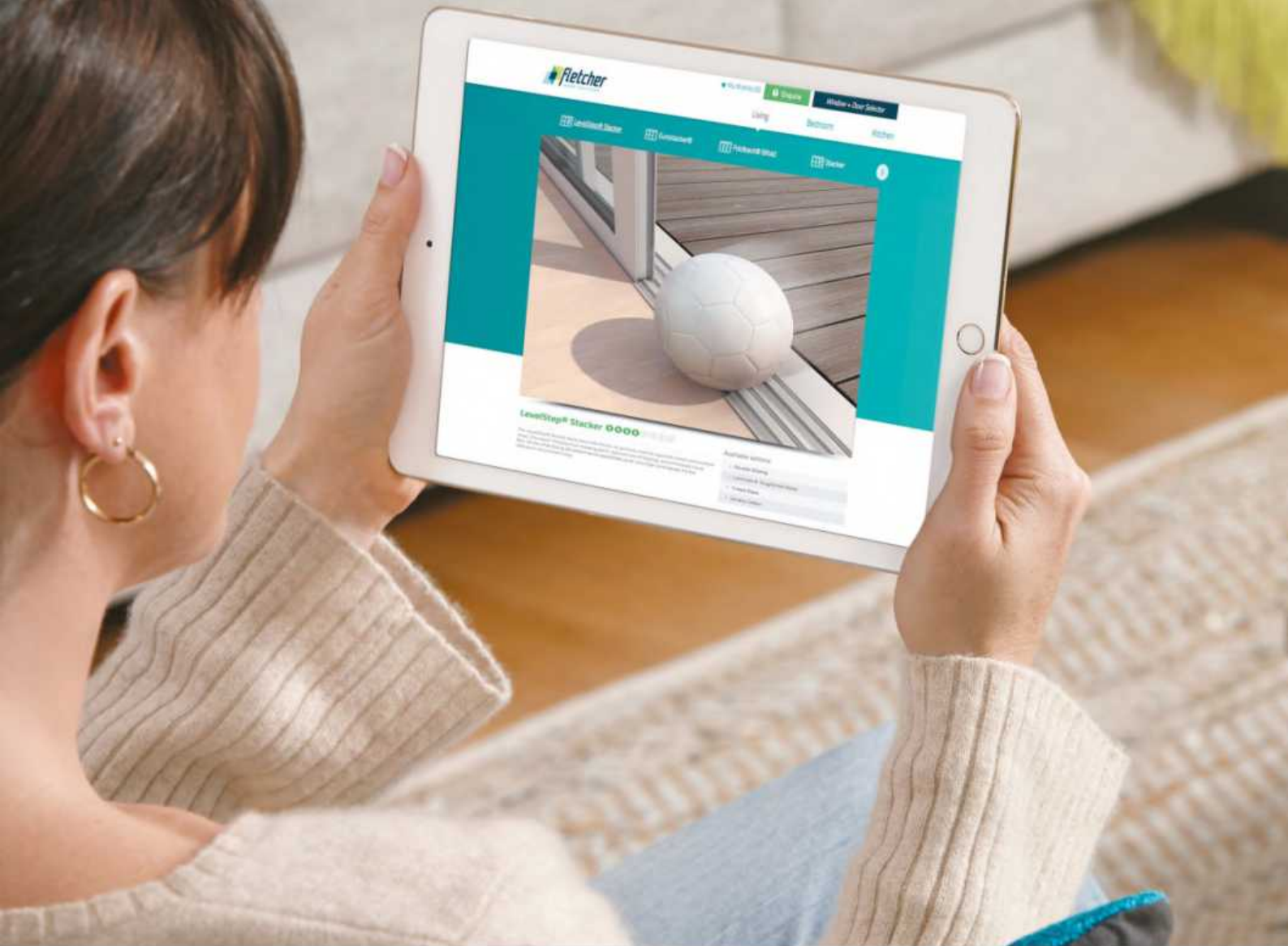
"We don't do things by halves," says Candy. "It's everything you think Christmas should be, and more." ■

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Prepare to party

Shake things up this Christmas with a festive setting that calls for a *celebration*

STYLING **EMILY SOMERVILLE-RYAN**
PHOTOGRAPHS **BELINDA MERRIE**



THIS PAGE Flamingo decorations \$3.50 each from The Christmas Store; faux mixed **pine wreath** \$64.90 from Citta Design; **flowers** from Bhana Brothers.

CHRISTMAS IS ALL about tradition, but there's a special pleasure in creating a party setting no one will forget by putting an original twist on the classic festive elements. A wreath, yes, but how about adorning it with cheeky pink flamingos? Or a tropical table bursting with pineapples and proteas? On these pages we present three options for putting a new spin on Christmas decor – tropical, Scandinavian-inspired and modern traditional. Have fun!



THIS PAGE Tablecloth in Canopy **fabric** in Malachite by Christian Lacroix \$259/m from Icon Textiles; Jungle Kitty **cushion** \$99, coral Hive **plant pot** \$24.99, yellow Geo **plant pot**, small \$39.99 and large \$93.99, **cactus** in **pot** \$39.99 and **plants** from \$14.99, all from Shut the Front Door; **flamingo** (partially visible) \$55 from The Christmas Store; Beldi **tea glasses** \$7 each and Beldi stemless **wine glasses** (containing punch) \$11 each, all from Father Rabbit; Art of Copper 24-piece **cutlery set** \$329 and Craft ceramic green **plates** \$19 each, all from Collected; **flowers** and **fruit** from Bhana Brothers; napkins and tags stylist's own. **OPPOSITE** White Hogsten Highback outdoor **chairs** \$399 each and Jungle Kitty floor **cushions** as above, all from Shut the Front Door; Spoonful baby pink tassel **garland** \$179 from Collected; all other items as above.

TROPICAL SPLENDOUR

Aren't we lucky to be living in the warmth of the southern hemisphere at Christmas? Make the most of our good fortune by creating a subtropical festive setting with a whimsical feel:

- Start with a tropical print tablecloth and jungle-inspired cushions, then add a cheerful flamingo or two for a touch of fantasy.
- Bring your backdrop into play by draping the bushes with a cheery tasselled fringe.

- Wrap napkins in banana leaves.
- Dress the table with cacti, brilliantly coloured flowers, pineapples and pomegranates (and perhaps a platter of tropical fruit for starters).
- Stud a wreath with vivid blooms (try hibiscus, bougainvillea or orchids) and add brilliantly colourful (but toning!) Christmas decorations. >





THIS PAGE Back left **cushion** in Designers Guild Zannachi fabric in Emerald; back right **cushion** in Soft Pantigre fabric in Papaya by Christian Lacroix; large central **cushion, flamingo** and **tassel garland** as before; presents wrapped in Miami **wallpaper** in Green and Coral from Cole & Son's Geometric II collection (flamingo tag), Eden Roc Rainette **wallpaper** by Christian Lacroix (watermelon tag) and Pantigre **wallpaper** in Topaze Kiwi by Christian Lacroix (pineapple tag), all from Icon Textiles; gift tags stylist's own. >



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THIS PAGE Framed **print** \$99, Fog Linen **bells**, small \$9 and medium \$13, and wooden **squirrel** and **alpaca** \$29 each, all from Father Rabbit; Gingerbread House **tealight holder** \$12.90 and white wooden **stars** \$5.90 for set of 12, all from Citta Design; miniature **Christmas tree** \$35.50 from The Christmas Store; wooden **heart** \$90 for set of seven from May Time.

OPPOSITE Main **Christmas tree** \$400, small miniature **tree** (on mantel) \$15, larger miniature **tree** \$35.50, all from The Christmas Store; also on mantel, from left: pillar **candle** \$5.95 and small **votive** \$7.95 set of six, both from Bed Bath N' Table; (on small trees) white **stars** \$5.90 set of 12 from Citta Design; hanging **diamond** \$30 set of four from Father Rabbit; hanging **heart** \$90 set of seven from May Time; **duck**, **alpaca** and **squirrel** \$29 each, all from Father Rabbit; Cathedral **tealight holder** \$24.90, **house** \$5.90 and Tiny Town **tealight** \$11.90, all from Citta Design; framed deer **print** \$99 and Fog Linen **bells**, small \$9, medium \$13, large \$19 (also on hearth), all from Father Rabbit; Gingerbread House **tealight holder** \$12.90, small **house** (also on black present) \$5.90, both from Citta Design; LED white **candle tree** \$20 from May Time; Gingerbread House **lightbox** \$29.90 from Citta Design; on hearth: gift **cards** from Father Rabbit; all other **wrap** and **ribbons** from Spotlight; Tiny Town **lightboxes**, large \$29.90 and small \$19.90, and Gingerbread House **tealight holder** (front left) \$19.90, all from Citta Design; house **tealight holder** (smallest, front right) \$16 from Father Rabbit; Seed **fairy lights** (in fireplace) \$65/10m from The Fairy Light Shop; (on big tree) hanging **houses** and **squares** \$9.50 each from Father Rabbit.

SIMPLY SCANDINAVIAN

When the sun is shining from a bright blue sky, the staples of a northern hemisphere Christmas – reindeer, sleigh bells, snow-swept roofs, roaring fires – may be drawing on the realms of fantasy. But what's wrong with a touch of fantasy at Christmas?

• Less is more when it comes to Scandinavian style. Keep your choice of colours neutral and baubles to a minimum.

- Warm the summer-time Christmas fireplace with fairy lights.
- Add glow to the setting with candles and tealight houses.
- Personalise your presents by adding sprigs of pine, feathers and Christmas decorations to a variety of patterned wrapping papers.
- Use an Advent tape (see page 58) to mark off the days to Christmas. >





THIS PAGE From left: small **house** on black present \$5.70 from Citta Design; **bell** on brown present \$9 from Father Rabbit; **Advent tape** \$39.90 from Citta Design; miniature Christmas **tree** and white **stars** as before; Tiny Town **lightboxes**, small \$19.90 and large \$29.90, and Gingerbread House **tealight holder** (front left) \$19.90, all from Citta Design; small house **tealight holder** (front right) \$16 from Father Rabbit; fairy lights as before; **wrap** and **ribbons** from Spotlight. **OPPOSITE** "Be Merry" **card** \$9.95, **bell** \$9, herb **scissors** \$31 set of three, "Noel" gift **cards** \$29 pack of 10 and "Naughty or Nice" **tags** \$29 pack of 10, all from Father Rabbit; star, wrap and ribbons as before. >





THIS PAGE Christmas **tree** \$400, green **bauble** \$15.90 set of 15, silver glass **snowflake** and **star** \$8.50 each, all from The Christmas Store; white wooden **cut-out star** \$11.25 from May Time; red **star** \$15.95 and red **ring** \$8.95, both from Bed Bath N' Table; gold **card** \$9.95, mint gift **card** \$4, striped **robin clip** \$6, Fog Linen striped **tea towel** (wrapping bottle) \$21 and "Oh What Fun" **card** \$9.95, all from Father Rabbit; puppy **gift tag** \$3.90 from Citta Design; all other **wrapping, boxes** and **ribbons** from Spotlight.

OPPOSITE Christmas **tree** \$400, spotted red **baubles** \$34 set of six, green **baubles** \$15.90 set of 15, silver glass **snowflakes** and **stars** \$8.50 each, all from The Christmas Store; white metal **hearts** and **snowflakes** \$7.50 each, white china **birds, trees** and **angels** \$5 each and white **cut-out stars** \$11.25 each, all from May Time; white metal **stars** \$9.95 each, red glass **balls** with small white spot \$7.50 each, red and white jingle bell **rings** \$8.95 each and red jingle bell **stars** \$15.95 each, all from Bed Bath N' Table; (on window seat) striped twill **cushions** \$44.95 each, red velvet **cushion** \$49.95, red and white **geometric cushion** \$36.95, all from Bed Bath N' Table; Deco Tile green **cushion** (close to tree) \$95, Shapes green and blue **cushion** (centre back) \$100 and Tumbling Blocks green **cushion** \$135, all from Collected; (under tree) red chambray **tea towel** (wrapping bottle) \$21 from Father Rabbit; cards, robin clip and striped tea towel as before; small red **bag** \$22 from Collected; all other **wrapping, boxes** and **ribbons** from Spotlight; green spot bag stylist's own; (hanging light) lace paper **lantern** \$49 from The Fairy Light Shop.

UPDATE A CLASSIC

Maybe you love almost everything about the traditional Christmas, from the red-white-and-green theme to the laden tree and sprigs of holly, but you're also hankering after a look that says Christmas 2015. So here are a few ideas for reimagining the classic look with a modern mind-set:

- Decorate the room with cushions that complement your tree and its decorations.
- Create your own retro garland for the tree by making paper chains.
- Make the wrapping part of the gift by dressing up presents in gorgeous tea towels and pillowcases.
- Set up a Christmas treat stand for your family and friends, with all your favourite whimsical decorations and delicacies (see page 62). >



THIS PAGE White china house **light** \$6 and white china tree **light** (bottom left) \$7, both from The Christmas Store; **Toadstool salt and pepper set** \$30 from Collected; **deer** \$12.95, **sitting deer** \$12.95, white **salt dishes** \$3.25 each and large white **bowl** \$8.20, all from Bed Bath N' Table; snowflake **globe** \$12.50, white china **acorn** ornament \$6.25 and holly and mistletoe **garland** \$30, all from May Time; **straws, flags** and **umbrellas**, all from Spotlight; cakestand, silver bowl, candle, red spotted cup and crystal bowl, all stylist's own. ■

Contacts Bhana Brothers (09) 376 5329; Bed Bath N' Table bedbathnatable.com.au, Citta Design cittadesign.com, Collected collected.co.nz, Father Rabbit fatherrabbit.co.nz, Icon Textiles icontextiles.co.nz, May Time Marketing maytime.co.nz, Shut the Front Door shutthefrontdoor.co.nz, Spotlight spotlight.co.nz, The Christmas Store (09) 309 2832, The Fairy Light Shop thefairylightshop.co.nz.



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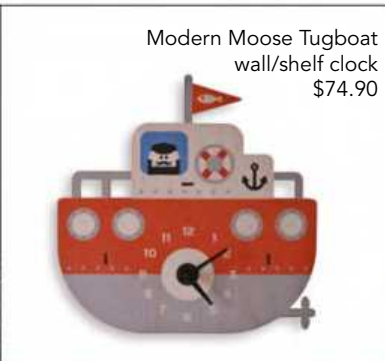


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Izola Shoe brush \$55
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Vidivi highball glasses
& old-fashioned
tumblers in
two designs
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Honeycomb

Diva



Kartell Oyster scented candle with
citrus, floral, and woody tones
Burn time 100 hours



Malle W. Trousseau
'Objects for Pasta'
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Artek Stool 60 in black lacquer
with 4 legs \$479, birch/white
laminate with 3 legs \$329



Moulin Roty
The Little Wardrobe Suitcase
\$174.90



Egizia Punto Argento glass &
silver dot bowl 23cm diameter
\$220



Baobab Black Pearl candles
10 cm \$124.90
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NZHOUSE
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ANTENNA

Eight pages of news and design trends

Call it the modernist's Christmas tree: a wooden version that looks almost – but not quite – like a hat rack. We love its sleek lines and Scandi charm. Cabinet \$239 from Akia, akia.co.nz; (on cabinet) wooden reindeer \$63 (for three), tree \$46 and shadow box \$16, all through May Time, maytime.co.nz; copper fairy lights \$29 from Nest, nest-direct.com; tree \$319 from Citta Design, cittadesign.com; all tree decorations, from \$4.20 each to \$21 for four, through Flower Systems, flowersystems.co.nz; rocking horse \$39.95 from Mocka, mocka.co.nz; rug and ribbon star stylist's own.

STYLING: TRACEY STRANGE WATTS; PHOTOGRAPHY: BELINDA MERRIE



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NEWS DECEMBER

Christmas snippets from our trend-spotters



GOING FOR GOLD

Now you can cover your Christmas table in gold without breaking the bank, using this glittering array of tableware from Freedom. Delight Small Crosses side plate \$16.95, Delight Angles side plate \$18.95, Glitter charger \$12.95, Paynter Gold Spot dinner plate \$19.95, Charm 16-piece golden cutlery set \$99, all from Freedom; freedomfurniture.co.nz.

backing
NZ
MADE



SEA STRUCK

Not that we're gold digging or anything, but let's just say we'd be glad to unwrap this filigreed fancy on the big day. Inspired by the "textured delights" of the ocean, the delicate gold-plated bronze necklace is by Nelson jeweller Louise Douglas. Sea Lace pendant \$185, louisedouglas.com.



FOR THE GROWN-UPS

Mel Chesneau from styledcanvas.com says: Less really is more when it comes to elegant Christmas table settings. I'd team a classic white tablecloth with a centrepiece of candlesticks and stylish brass napkin rings around white linen napkins. This set of six brass rings by Broste Copenhagen can be found at shop.tessuti.co.nz.



SWEET INSPIRATION

If your thoughts (like ours) turn to pudding at Christmas, you might share our taste for these scented candles in four yummy pudding "flavours", in cute retro tin basins by Smith & Co. \$29.99, thearomatherapycompany.co.nz. >



3 DREAM DATES

THE ART OF GIFT-GIVING

Parnell Gallery's seventh annual Christmas Group Exhibition is back, featuring affordable work from well-known New Zealand artists such as Anna Stichbury and Greer Clayton. The small-format (200 x 200mm or 300 x 300mm) unframed works will be priced from \$200-\$300. A great chance for first-time art buyers to start their collections – or to pick up a present for the art-lover in your life. The work pictured is *Coromandel Beach* by Tom Folwell. From 28 November, 10am-4pm, Parnell Gallery, 263 Parnell Rd, Parnell, parnellgallery.co.nz

CLAUS FOR A CAUSE

Get into the Christmas spirit with a fun run (or walk) for charity. The 2-3km Santa runs will take place nationwide, with thousands of Santa suit-clad walkers and runners setting off to jiggle their bellies in aid of KidsCan. You'll get a free Santa suit as part of your entry fee (kids under 13 get a Santa hat), but elves, Rudolfs and snowmen are also welcome. 2-3 December, 6.30pm, locations nationwide, adults \$25, lacticturkey.co.nz/SantaRun/

CHRISTMAS IN THE VINES

Celebrate all things festive with opera sensations Sol3 Mio, who will be performing Christmas carol favourites and hits from their debut album in the beautiful setting of the Waipara Hills Winery. Anika Moa joins them for what promises to be a very special celebration. 19 December, 5pm, Waipara Hills Winery, 780 Glasnevin Rd, Waipara, from \$85, waiparahillswines.co.nz

ADVENT ARCHITECTURE

Here's a novel take on the advent calendar; a paper city, complete with 24 numbered homes and skyscrapers. Make a building each day or make them all beforehand, hiding treats under each one. US\$16 (plus shipping) from moonpicnic.com.



DESIGN CLASSICS: DOLLY MIXTURE

Sneak some classic cool into your Santa sack with Alexander Girard's Wooden Dolls collection, created in 1952 by the influential American-based designer for his Santa Fe home and now reproduced by design house Vitra. Part decorative object, part toy, the dolls (there are 22 different designs; pictured above are Nos 9, 1, 10 and 12) were influenced by Girard's fascination with folk art and his own extensive collection of objects and toys. \$174.90 each from Corso de' Fiori, corso.co.nz.



PICK OF THE BLOGS –

A Subtle Revelry

Every time I pay a visit to this fun website (asubtlerevelry.com), I smile. That's because it's a joyous celebration of, well, celebrations, and full of cool (but not cheesy) crafts to match. Check out the holiday section for festive food and decorating ideas, including the aptly named Gigantic Wall Stars (left) and – my personal favourite – glittery ice cubes. *Andrea Warmington >*

ONE3374



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PAPER'S BACK, WRITERS

Digital personal organisers may have their attractions, but where's the romance in a cold, empty screen? Call us old-fashioned but we like to see the big picture when we map out our day. Try Crave Home's Inaluxe 2016 Diary, with space for the entire week on each double-page spread and bright, harlequin designs from Australian duo Inaluxe to delight the eye. \$37.50 from Crave Home, cravehome.co.nz.



SIX OF THE BEST

So simple, so effective. This multitasking bud vase from Nest is a foolproof option for creating a Christmas table centrepiece. We like it with all the blooms the same, but there's no reason why you shouldn't mix it up. 6 Mini Ball Vase, \$19 from Nest, nest-direct.com.



FIONA HAWTIN

Fiona Hawtin is the owner of Violet Bespoke Patisserie. The former magazine editor took herself off to a chocolate and patisserie school in Melbourne before returning to Auckland to set up her own business.

WHY THE PASSION FOR ÉCLAIRS?

I love choux pastry, which is partly why I did the course. The éclairs day was out of this world. They were haute couture versions with complex fillings and flavour combinations. So I set about working on my own flavours. I'm in love with the blackcurrant and violet one right now.

WHAT ARE YOUR CHOUX PASTRY TIPS?

Start with a profiterole, as they can be more free-form than éclairs. Fill with cream with a quick chocolate ganache over the lot – no one's going to say no. You can make the choux the night before, refresh them in the oven on 180°C for five minutes, cool then fill. Bake a maximum of 12 éclairs on a tray. I bake choux on 200°C for 25-30 minutes, before turning the oven down to 120°C for 10-15 minutes.

WHAT'S YOUR GO-TO FESTIVE DESSERT?

We usually end up with a lemon tart served with raspberries and cream. Anything with lemons is usually a winner.

ANY IDEAS FOR A PORTABLE DESSERT?

A tiramisu made with limoncello is pretty robust. Or a Far Breton (French flan) with brandy-soaked prunes. Indestructible.

WHAT WILL YOU EAT AT CHRISTMAS?

I'm tempted to do a caramelised onion and Stilton tart ahead of the lemon tart. And gougères (cheese choux puffs) with Champagne to start. When else can you have three pastry courses? ■



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STYLING **SARAH LODS**
PHOTOGRAPHS **BELINDA MERRIE**

1 Beach towel \$79 from Macy Home, macyhome.co.nz. **2** Zuperzozial cups \$48.90 from Sabato, sabato.co.nz. **3** Lipstick tray \$45 from Seletti, seletticonceptstore.com. **4** Orbit sound speakers \$499 and pink skin \$4990, both from Askew, askew.co.nz. **5** Oase watering can \$7 from Alfresco, alfrescohomeandgarden.co.nz. **6** Fire basket \$425 from Tim Webber, timwebberdesign.com. **7** Firepot (small) \$65 from Alfresco. **8** Slate garden labels \$34 from Father Rabbit, fatherrabbit.com. **9** Seletti flamingo pool float (large) \$129 from Coveted Gifts, covetedgifts.com. **10** Brass-plated garden scissors \$55 from Father Rabbit. **11** Honey rechargeable LED indoor/outdoor lamp by Serralunga \$430 from ECC, ecc.co.nz.

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Clockwise, from lamp: Base **floor lamp** by Tom Dixon \$2870 from ECC, ecc.co.nz; Katrin **chair** \$6900 from Studio Italia, studioitalia.co.nz; My **Robot** \$182 from Seletti, seletticonceptstore.com; Hay gold line **wine glasses** \$80.50 each from Cult, cultdesign.co.nz; brass **quatrefoil** by Max Gimblett \$150 from Remember Them, rememberthem.nz; **wine rack** \$99.90 from Allium, alliuminteriors.co.nz; brass horse **ring bowl** by Jonathan Adler \$155 from Askew, askew.co.nz; melamine **plate**, part of Yuan Osorio Serving Set Vase \$239 from The Object Room, theobjectroom.co.nz; Slit **table** in mirror brass \$1345.50 from Cult; two-tone ceramic **vase** \$52 from Bo Concept, boconcept.com; glass **atomiser** \$69 from Seletti; porcelain **container** \$9.50 and **straws** \$13.80, all from Allium; vintage African **throw** (used as rug) \$495 from Fabric, thisisfabric.com.



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with some cool kitchen kit for Christmas

STYLING **SARAH LODS** PHOTOGRAPHS **BELINDA MERRIE**

1 Tadafusa bread knife \$190 from Shelter, theshelter.co.nz. **2** Cheese blade \$50 from The Poi Room, thepoiroom.co.nz. **3** Breadboard and bowl \$139 from Askew, askew.co.nz. **4** Handmade oyster knife \$290 from Sabato, sabato.co.nz. **5** Koizumi kettle \$420 from Shelter. **6** Scanwood salt box \$59.95 from Milly's, millys.co.nz. **7** Alessi honey dipper \$99 from Askew. **8** Fog Linen iron pan \$57 from Father Rabbit, fatherrabbit.com. **9** Muuto Turn Around juicer \$89.95 from The Object Room, theobjectroom.co.nz. **10** Mason jar cocktail shaker \$79.95 and Shake \$45, both from Milly's. **11** Grater \$94 from Douglas and Bec, douglasandbec.com.

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MUTED GLAMOUR

Dress your tree in cool white, mint and pale gold for an understated take on Christmas colour

STYLING **TRACEY STRANGE WATTS**
PHOTOGRAPH **BELINDA MERRIE**

From traditional glass baubles and tinkly bells to wooden reindeer and inexpensive sparkly colour, Christmas decorations come in all shapes to suit all budgets. Clockwise from top left: mint **bauble** \$19.99 a set (comes in a set of 50 that also includes the matt balls shown on the cabinet and the **glitter balls** shown top and far right) from Spotlight, spotlight.co.nz; hanging **reindeer** \$15.70, frosted **ball** \$5.50, frosted **teardrop** \$4.40 and white **ball** \$21 (for four), all through Flower Systems, flowersystems.co.nz; glass **heart** \$11.40, antique-finish **ball** \$9.95, glass **ball** \$9.80 and silver **bell** \$10.35, all through Le Forge, leforge.co.nz; textured **ball** (centre) \$8.90 and Silke wall **art** \$576 (for a set of four) from May Time, maytime.co.nz.



Natural selection

Sum up the *relaxed essence* of a Kiwi Christmas
with our pick of the *garden bunches*

FLOWERS **MARKANTONIA AND SCOTTIE & ROSE**
STYLING **SARAH LODS** / PHOTOGRAPHS **BELINDA MERRIE**

WILD AND WHIMSICAL For her garden bouquet (this page) Antonia de Vere of Markantonia (markantonia.com) wanted to soften the traditional Christmas colours of red and green with tone-on-tone burgundies and pinks: "Pink is definitely having a moment". Antonia started with foliage (fluffy phylica) then wove in flowers in a spiralling arrangement, balancing the larger blooms (proteas and roses). "Pull elements up to create height," says Antonia, "and layer them for visual interest. But don't be too precious."

A WELCOMING WREATH Antonia's rustic twist on the Christmas wreath (opposite) started with fresh twigs twisted into a circle then left to dry to make a sturdy base. She added foliage, then flowers (including aquilegia and pohutukawa) attached to tiny balls of Oasis and wired to the base. The garden-picked foliage and flowers don't need to be "too perfect," says Antonia. "They'll have a bit more life to them."



REGENCY SIDE TABLE \$1750 FROM EUROPEAN ANTIQUES, EUROPEANANTIQUES.CO.NZ;
GIFT TAG \$4 FROM FATHER RABBIT, FATHERRABBIT.COM

WOVEN MAGIC Event planners
Scottie & Rose used slim silver
birch branches and twigs to create
the wreaths on these pages,
wrapping them around each
other, twisting them into a circle,
then putting them in a bucket or
vase to hold their shape. It's best
to pick fresh branches or gather
them as soon as they drop, so they
retain their shape after they dry.
The wreath on the plate simply has
flowers tucked into it (if they've
been picked from the garden,
stand them in water overnight so
they will last well). Choose a
branch with a lovely shape to
create the centrepiece in the
background; place it in a pot filled
with Oasis or damp tissue and top
with moss. Find Scottie & Rose at
facebook.com/scottieandrose.





POPPIES & PROTEAS To create a longer-lasting arrangement using silver birch wreaths (instructions for creating the wreath at left), Scottie & Rose sat the wreaths on a neutral-coloured vessel containing damp Oasis and arranged proteas, poppies, ranunculus, tulips and orange blossoms with foliage. >

(THIS PAGE) ANTIQUE OAK TABLE \$7500 AND GREEN CRYSTAL GLASSES \$525 (FOR 6), ALL FROM EUROPEAN ANTIQUES; PLATES \$31 FROM FATHER RABBIT; (OPPOSITE) MARBLE PLATE \$25 AND CUP \$9, BOTH FROM COLLECTED, COLLECTED.CO.NZ; VINTAGE CUTLERY POA FROM EUROPEAN ANTIQUES

A WEE TREE Any plant with a pleasingly Christmas-tree-like shape will work to create a loose and natural look like this one created by Scottie & Rose. Cover a large plate with moss (you can gather your own or buy it from a florist), tip the tree out of its pot – root ball and all – and sit the tree on the moss. When it has dried out and needs watering, take the tree off the plate, sit it in a bucket and gently pour water over the root ball; allow to drain and replace on top of the moss. A little tree will not tolerate this kind of treatment for long so, as soon as Christmas is over, be kind and plant it in the garden. ■



REDWOOD TREE FROM PONSONBY PLANT CENTRE, (09) 376 6887;
SANTA FROM THE CHRISTMAS STORE, NEWMARKET, (09) 309 2823



LEFT: Sonia in her dining room: "I tend to be more conservative in the colours I wear than the colours I use in my home." She loves the rich colours in her taxidermied pheasant. ABOVE: Sonia changes the displays of curios to suit the season.

THE COLOUR EXPERTS

Quirky collections and strong colour define the trademark style of Sonia Couling, our first Resene Colour Expert

A big colourful hug. That's how Sonia Couling describes the feeling of walking into her rainbow-hued north Auckland villa. Sonia is a fan of colour, which she says is "the key to adding personality to a home", and has experimented with it over numerous home renovations. One of her trademark tricks is to paint the walls, trims and architectural details in the same colour to make the room feel larger. Sonia's home featured on the cover of *NZ House & Garden's* August issue and will be in our Auckland (Matakana/Omahu) house tour (sponsored by Resene) on 4 March 2016.

WHY DID YOU PICK RESENE 'BOWIE' FOR YOUR DINING ROOM?

It was winter and I envisaged dinners alongside the open fire, in a room with a real sense of warmth and drama. I'm personally not keen on reds, as I find they limit what you can use with them. I loved this blue because it was rich and strong.

WHAT IS YOUR PROCESS FOR SELECTING INTERIOR COLOURS?

I like to start with an all-white space, like a blank canvas, then add colour to create a look or personality. It's important to think about the amount of light and work with that. If it's a dark space you can embrace that and go with deep colours to create a snug, cosy space, or you can add pale colours for more warmth and softness. Then I like to add a bit of quirk and surprise by using colour in unexpected places: like painting my French doors a strong yellow or doing the ceilings black.

HAVE YOU GOT ANY FAVOURITE COLOUR COMBINATIONS?

For a grown-up look, a dusky pink paired with a soft grey (right). Marble and copper are a match made in heaven. Crisp white with a dark indigo blue, opulent green or black is always right for a cool, sophisticated space.

HOW IMPORTANT IS WHITE AND/OR BLACK FOR OFFSETTING COLOUR?

Very important. A black or dark shade can add depth and drama and really help to ground a room. Lashings of white makes a dynamic contrast alongside any palette.

WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR BEING BOLDER WITH COLOUR?

Don't be afraid of colour! Think about the effect you want and ask advice about the tone of the paint: is it warm or cool? Then get yourself a couple of Resene test pots and have a play. Remember that adding a bold colour can be a dramatic change and a bit of a shock, so give yourself a week at least to get used to it. If you're still not happy, then paint over it again until you get a result you really love.

WHO INSPIRES YOU?

For years, I've been a fan of flamboyant designer and fashion icon Iris Apfel. She's now 94 years old and still embraces and is excited by colour. Truly inspirational.





SEASONAL SPARKLE

The latest products from the beauty counter

WORDS & STYLING **TRACEY STRANGE WATTS**

1 Xmas bauble \$3.90 from Citta Design, cittadesign.com. **2** Auli decoration \$9.90 from Citta Design. **3** La Prairie Anti-Aging Rapid Response Booster \$405. **4** Jo Malone London Pine & Eucalyptus Scented Candle \$115. **5** Elizabeth Arden Eight Hour Cream Sun Defense for Face \$43. **6** Mary Kay Moisturizing Spray Lotion \$29. **7** Clinique Deep Comfort Hand and Cuticle Cream \$39. **8** Reindeer head hanging decoration \$4.90 from Citta Design. **9** Mor Lip Macaron in Sorbet \$9.99. **10** Australis Nail Polish in Aqua \$8.50. **11** L'Oréal Paris Color Riche Nail Polish in Banana Pop \$9.99. **12** Zoya Mini Nail Polish in Yummy \$13.95. **13** Elizabeth Arden Beautiful Colour Precision Glide Eye Liner in Sapphire \$46. **14** Ecoya Christmas Mini Madison Candle in Fresh Pine Needles \$24.95. **15** Leighton Denny Nail Enamel in Reach for the Sky \$30. **16** Chi Chi Baked Eyeshadow in Gimme Gimme a Man \$21.99. **17** La Prairie Silver Rain EDP \$145.

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Elizabeth Arden

NEW YORK

A photograph of a white wooden gate in a garden. The gate is flanked by plants, including a large magnolia on the left and a topiary on the right. A Christmas wreath is hanging on the right side of the gate. In the background, a large snow-capped mountain (Mount Taranaki) is visible under a blue sky with clouds. The foreground features a garden bed with purple flowers and a gravel path leading through the gate.

THIS PAGE From their kitchen window, Jo and Murray Collins can look out across their Te Kiri dairy farm to this magnificent view of Mount Taranaki; the Christmas wreath on the gate was made by Jo's New Plymouth-based florist cousin, Nicci Goodin; a pair of magnolias (only one of which can be seen here, at left) flank the gate, with salvias, lobelias, irises and *Nepeta* 'Six Hills Giant' beneath; the topiary on the right has been decorated for the season with a white feather garland.

OPPOSITE A giant white stone urn sets off the plastered exterior wall of the family room, added six years back; Jo clips the topiary herself with scissors; it's a time-consuming business, she says, but it "gives you a nice sharp edge".



Grand finale

Rounding off the year with a *timeless traditional* Christmas is the *best gift* she can give her family, says this *rural Taranaki* homeowner

WORDS **ANDREA WARMINGTON** / PHOTOGRAPHS **JANE DOVE JUNEAU**



THIS PAGE The elm table in the formal lounge/dining room was made for Jo by local craftsman Brad Raven; the flowers on the table were provided by cousin Nicci and Jo added the conifer greenery to a new pendant light fitting sourced by her friend designer Mike Mansvelt; the golden light from the faux candles gives a lovely ambience, she says. **OPPOSITE** (clockwise from top) Striped wool Christmas stockings from Cranfields hang from the fireplace mantel in the formal lounge below a white hydrangea wreath; Jo has decked the tree in red and white silk hydrangeas, feather garlands, white and silver birds and red and silver baubles; although she sticks to the same palette each year, "there are always a few new things in the mix". Jo and Murray Collins. The place setting features French Laguiole cutlery and plates from French Country; Nicci provided the small posies of peonies, white and red roses, set off by gypsophila, sprigs of rosemary and sphagnum moss.

JO COLLINS RECKONS that guys get a bit of a raw deal in the Christmas gift department. Jo, who is a mother to three now grown-up sons – Daniel, 31, Liam, 29, and Rhys, 27 – says it's just too easy to buy the boys practical presents. "You just wrap them up and then chuck them under the tree. I mean, I put a lot of thought into what I buy them, but they're always practical things – things I know they need. You can tell that they know what they're getting and there's just not that anticipation and excitement."

So, last Christmas, she decided it was time to do something different. "I decided to have a bit of fun. I put all of their individually wrapped gifts into one big wrapped box so they

wouldn't know what they were getting." She says the boys "looked a bit perplexed" as she handed them each their box on Christmas Eve, while the family gathered around the fire at their Taranaki farmhouse. "They were like, 'What are you doing, Mum?'"

But, once they dug into their boxes, they were "like little boys. It was fantastic. They went from one gift to the next, oohing and aahing. Honestly, it was the best thing I've ever done. Guys at that age, they pretend they don't like Christmas but they do."

And now that Daniel has two little sons of his own – Lucas, two, and Heath, nine months – Jo has a new generation to delight and surprise. After all these years, she says, making Christmas fun for her family is still what matters most. >





THIS PAGE (clockwise from above) A painting by Whanganui artist Jilly Hare hangs over the family room mantel; the equine photography is by Diana Black Design; the Collinses call the leather Halo sofa at right “the sleepy sofa” for its comfort. Roses potted with rosemary sprigs and sphagnum join a selection of olive pots on a banded trunk sourced by Mike Mansvelt. Jo is partial to natural earthy tones, such as golds and browns. **OPPOSITE** (from top) The Christmas cake, made by Jo’s friend Maree, gets its own ivy garland on the polished granite benchtop. A vintage light fitting, Mongolian sideboard, French-style armchair and Zoffany wallpaper augment the classic style of Jo’s kitchen; the copper pots on the island shelf are from French & Sons in Bulls.



“Whether they’re adults or little ones, it still means a lot to give them gifts. It’s more about the joy I get from giving to them. That’s what Christmas is about for me.”

The Collins boys grew up here on the family dairy farm in Te Kiri near Opunake, Taranaki, where Jo and husband Murray have lived for 30 years – although it’s been in the Collins family for much longer than that.

“It actually started out as Murray’s great-grandfather’s farm,” says Jo. “So our grandkids will be the sixth generation here, which is pretty cool.” The couple lived first in a lovely, but “really, really tiny” Lockwood home that Murray’s parents had built especially for the newly-weds.

Fifteen years ago, the couple took over ownership of the 360ha farm and decided that the time had come to renovate the Lockwood. In carefully planned stages, they added a new kitchen to one end of the house, a second living area to the other, gibbed over the exposed wood inside and plastered the outside. “That changed it completely,” says Jo. “The wood was just so overpowering and it was really hard to furnish. It was really dark and it had darkened with age.” >







THIS PAGE (clockwise from top left) Another of Nicci's posies sits atop a stack of Jo's interior design books. More Bianca Lorenne bedding features in the west-facing master bedroom, which gets the afternoon sun; the bedside angel only comes out at Christmas, says Jo. The marble-topped vanity in the main bathroom was designed by Jo and custom-made; the wallpaper is by Osborne & Little. The cedar front door was custom-made by craftsman Brad Raven, then banded with metal strapping and wax-finished to give an aged patina; Jo made the chrysanthemum and ivy wreath.

OPPOSITE Nicci Goodin made the spare bedroom's Christmas tree from coiled grapevine and artificial flowers; the quilt, comforter and matching floral cushion are all by Bianca Lorenne; the tartan cushions were made in Scotland by Johnstons of Elgin.

Jo then set about decorating. Although she doesn't lean towards a particular style (she would describe her look as classic country with a modern, masculine edge, which she attributes to having lived surrounded by so many men), she likes to choose furniture that she can imagine being around for generations to come. This includes a beautiful lacquered Georgian dresser in the living room and the custom-made elm dining table and chairs she bought a decade ago that will one day go to one of the boys.

"Every time I buy a piece, I think of the kids and think of the fact that these are things I can leave for them and they'll have beautiful pieces. It's about that as much as anything when you purchase something. You can throw a few new things into the mix, but I'm all about things lasting. I don't want disposable."

Jo aims for a timeless look when it comes to decorating for Christmas. She sticks to a palette of red, white and green and plenty of flowers and foliage (though not too over the top). >





THIS PAGE The family sits down for lunch around the outdoor table: from left, Daniel, Murray, Jo, Daniel's wife Elizabeth holding Heath, Lucas and Liam.

A few years ago she experimented with a more modern look but it just didn't feel right, she says. "Christmas isn't Christmas without a bit of red in it."

That doesn't mean, however, that she does the same thing every year. "I mix it up a little bit because I do have a heck of a lot of decorations. It's pretty much always the same colour theme but texturally it might be a little different. I couldn't do the same thing every year because I'd get bored with that."

Christmas decorations go up in mid-November (Jo spends an entire day decorating, including several hours on the tree alone), which gives her plenty of time to think about how she'll surprise her sons. "I think I'll do the boxes again this year. The only problem is that they're probably expecting it." Perhaps she could try an unusually shaped gift box? "I'm going to have to think about that one." ■

Q & A

BEST CHRISTMAS MEMORY: It would be me, my sister and my brother hiding behind the Christmas tree one year when we were really young, waiting to bust Father Christmas putting the presents under the tree. And, of course, Mum came out and found us and shooed us off to bed.

START SHOPPING AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE: I buy throughout the year and put stuff away, so I can focus on each person and really enjoy choosing a gift for them without the rush.

PUT EXTRA EFFORT INTO WRAPPING: It gives as much joy as the gift itself. And it shows that you really care.

I LOVE CHRISTMAS BECAUSE: I see it as the grand finale to the year that was.

I HAD DECORATING HELP FROM: My friend Mike Mansvelt, who's a landscape/interior designer. He's been fabulous. He says, "Jo, you're 95 per cent there, but we'll just give it that little bit extra."

FAVOURITE TREASURE: The possum fur throw that usually lives on the back of the linen-covered sofa in the family room. I had admired a similar throw in a design store when Murray and I were up in Auckland with friends for a weekend. Then six months later he surprised me with this one for my birthday. There's always a tussle over who gets to snuggle up in it.

Jo Collins



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Home to roost

A downsizing couple have feathered a small but perfectly formed nest on the Wairarapa range

WORDS **JANE HURLEY** / PHOTOGRAPHS **ELIZABETH GOODALL**



THIS PAGE An old tin shed, which was standing in the garden when Linda and Richard Kirkland bought their Greytown cottage, has become Linda's studio; Linda made the door wreath from dried grapevine and coloured paper.

OPPOSITE Linda on the verandah under the clematis with Staffordshire bull terriers Baxter (left) and Lily.



LINDA KIRKLAND CHEERFULLY admits to having “a bit of a chicken fetish”. She’s been known to collect them, in fact. That’s both the live variety and the kind you arrange on the kitchen bench and have to dust. Once, she says, in their previous home – a much-loved art deco house in Eastbourne – “A friend of my son’s came over and said to him, ‘Did you know your mother’s got more than 100 chickens in her kitchen?’”

Now that the children have flown the coop and Linda and husband Richard have moved to a minuscule but gorgeous wee cottage in Greytown, the ceramic chicken collection has down-sized but the real one has blossomed.

“I’ve got seven bantams here. I love chickens, they’re so appealing. Each one has a different personality and character and you do get to know them.” And no, not one of them will ever grace the table for Christmas dinner. There are no unnatural chicken deaths in this household. “I’m pathetic,” says Linda. “If they die, they get buried.” They are, after all, “part of the family”. >

DESIGN NOTE

Linda deals with limited space by hiding appliances in built-in cupboards, going for symmetry (two chairs flanking the deco trolley and the oak dresser) and always measuring furniture carefully before buying.

THIS PAGE Linda wanted a kitchen with an “English country/Shaker” feel; Lennox Woodcraft in Masterton built the cabinets and the Belfast sink is an antique that “weighs a ton”; the French antique Baltic pine table is from Country Trader in Greytown; artist Lisa Harman made the *Home* sign. **OPPOSITE** (clockwise from top left) The wooden chair (foreground) was found at the tip; Richard made a new seat and Linda upholstered it. Linda collected the birds’ nests and feathers displayed on the kitchen trolley, but the eggs aren’t real. Vintage cookware sits on a range cooker by Leisure. The artworks are by Linda, except for a black and white photograph by Geoff Walker; the 1920s oak dresser was brought from South Africa.



THIS PAGE (clockwise from right) The couple bought the sofa 15 years ago from Freedom; Linda loves the painting of a kakapo in a bowler hat: "He's so cheeky". The old tin hut is Linda's workspace: "That's where I hide away". Baxter chills out in front of the old rimu fireplace, which came from Wellesley College in Days Bay, where Linda used to work; on the mantelpiece is a buffalo sculpture bought in Zimbabwe.

OPPOSITE The antique kauri cupboard (left) came from Greytown; Linda painted the "cheap as chips" hallway table black; it holds an Italian stoneware jug and an angel from one of her favourite shops, Blue Moon in Havelock North; the etching above the sofa is by Dunedin artist Simon Kaan.



The non-feathered part of the family – printmaker and school librarian Linda ("I wouldn't really want to say that I'm an artist; that sounds so pretentious. I draw"), her accountant/consultant husband Richard and their two boys, James and Thomas – arrived in New Zealand from South Africa in 1994. "Our two boys were four and seven when we emigrated. We were concerned about their future in South Africa. When we left it was in a very turbulent phase. There was a lot of violence."

They still have family over there and Linda and Richard return quite often. But, although Linda misses the dramatic landscapes of Africa and its multicultural diversity, "It's a lot more peaceful here. My children could ride their bikes home from school. That doesn't happen in South Africa. It didn't happen then and it doesn't happen now." >





THIS PAGE (clockwise from left) In the master bedroom, a painting by South African artist and family friend Ann Lindsell-Stewart hangs above the bed – it depicts a beach the family loved back home; the chandelier came from Blue Moon and the gilt mirror from an antiques shop in Napier. The minute guest bedroom houses a beautiful antique French bed from Greytown's Country Trader. A roll-top bath is neatly accommodated in the relatively spacious bathroom; it's new but fits perfectly with the period charm.

OPPOSITE Old forks from a Greytown antiques shop decorate the garage wall; Linda and Richard put new French doors in at the side and back.



So what prompted the move from the beach at Eastbourne to a diminutive workingman's cottage in the Wairarapa? "We bought this place just on a whim, actually," says Linda. They were over in Greytown for the weekend with friends, saw a small cottage on the market, walked in and thought, "Cute".

"About a week later I turned to Richard and said, 'I think we should buy that cottage'. He said, 'I do too'. And we did."

For a while it was rented out but then they started using it as a weekender. "The more we came over and enjoyed the lovely climate, the more we thought, this is where we really want to be."

There was a fair amount of work to be done but, having built several houses in South Africa and renovated two in Eastbourne, the Kirklands didn't flinch. Many of the old walls were rotten. "Essentially we took all the exterior walls down and put it all back." One was full of ants' nests and the walls of the tiny sunroom were stuffed with 1980s newspapers and "pictures of Princess Di". But they got there in the end.

"Because the house is so small, most of our furniture wouldn't fit. So we had to buy little pieces that would." Many were picked up for a song and revitalised by Linda. "I think for me the greatest pleasure is finding something and doing it up. This lovely little chair, would you believe it? I found it at a rubbish dump." >







THIS PAGE The old copper watering can was dug up by Linda and Richard in the garden of their previous Eastbourne house and polished up.

OPPOSITE (from top) Linda's petite Pekin bantam chickens: "They're adorable and laying well at the moment – we're swimming in eggs." A decorative terracotta pot, mottled green with exposure to the elements, overflows with succulents. Linda plants ornamental grasses under the feijoa tree; as a gardener she is, she says, "passionate" and "impatient".

One particularly precious item is the buffalo sculpture over the fireplace. Hand-carved in African mahogany, it was bought from African traders when the couple were on holiday in Zimbabwe, visiting Richard's sister. The trouble began when they started wondering how to get it back home safely. Freightage turned out to be prohibitive, so they wrapped it in bubble wrap "as best we could" and took it on the plane.

"Needless to say, by the time we got back here it was pretty wrecked. I said to Richard, 'Look, we're never going to fix this,

it's best just to use it as firewood.'" No, said an undaunted Richard, he was going to fix it. "And he did. He put it together like a giant jigsaw puzzle, then restrained and repolished it."

Is it ever a problem, living in such a wee place? No, says Linda. "I think you just adjust to what you've got." There is a slight downside – entertaining is limited to about eight guests.

But that's hardly a calamity. "We love having friends over but we kind of enjoy our own space. Our home is our little place where we come and hide away from the rest of the world." >



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THIS PAGE White pelargoniums and alyssum in the front garden; the stones edged the garden beds when the couple moved in; Linda finds her hydrangeas “really rewarding; they’re probably one of my favourite plants”.

“I love coming home and lighting the candles, pouring a glass of wine and lighting a fire in winter, or in summer just sitting on the deck,” says Linda.

So, given that home-grown chicken is off the menu for Christmas dinner, what will they be doing?

“We’ll sometimes have a barbecue. Last year I made a paella. We’ll sit outside and eat, it’s pretty casual.” The bantam chooks will no doubt be relieved. ■

Q&A

THIS YEAR WE’RE DECORATING THE CHRISTMAS TABLE WITH: Branches from our silver birch tree, adorned with bird decorations I have collected and our African-style favourites.

MOST TREASURED POSSESSION: Photos of parents, family heirlooms and paintings.

OUR FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS RITUAL IS: Late-afternoon picnics and swims down by the Waiohine River complete with dogs, wine and beer.

BEST STORAGE IDEA: Hide the fridge, TV and washing machine to keep things simple and uncluttered in a small space.

MY FAVOURITE FESTIVE MEMORY IS: Family Christmas with friends on Slipper Island off the Coromandel: white sand, crimson pohutukawa and the Pacific Ocean as far as the eye could see.

BEST MONEY WE EVER SPENT: Water storage tanks to water the garden during the hot summer months.

Linda and Richard Kirkland

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"First thing that came out of our mouths was we'll be back, we're gonna do it again, and we will do it again, most definitely."



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Open house

Christmas is the *ultimate celebration* for a family who love entertaining and have the *perfect party pad* to match

WORDS **ANDREA WARMINGTON** / PHOTOGRAPHS **JACKIE MEIRING**



THESE PAGES The Christmas tree takes centre stage in Nikki and Kevin Denholm's Mission Bay living room at this time of year; the family take a trip to Mount Gabriel Christmas Tree Farm in Mangere Bridge each year to pick out and help cut down the perfect tree, which is then decorated with paper, ceramic and wooden doves; *Moana* by Alexis Neal hangs above the dresser with a decorative Ethiopian cross below it (left), one of several throughout the house; the shepherd figure is from Tanzania.





THE DENHOLM FAMILY are “very big celebrators,” says Nikki Denholm. Indeed, the family’s contemporary home in Mission Bay, Auckland has played host to a number of fabulous fetes since Nikki, her husband Kevin and their children Isabella, 16, Lulu, 13, and Mia, seven, moved here five years ago. They included a beautiful wedding that saw the house “filled with flowers” and a dedication ceremony for a friend’s baby, which was held in the walled courtyard. Nikki describes it as one of the happiest days in the house.

It comes as no surprise, then, to find that the Denholm family goes all out at Christmas. “We love Christmas. We have a Christian

faith, so Christmas is quite special from that perspective, and then there’s the fact that we just love celebrations! We love entertaining. We have so many Christmas celebrations and rituals... I would do something every day if I could.”

She’s well on her way. Evenings during the festive season are dominated by drinks and dinners with close friends and family, including a glögg (mulled wine) night, a nod to the family’s Swedish connection – Nikki’s father headed a Swedish company’s New Zealand operation and they often visited Scandinavia. Nikki and her children also make pepparkakor, a Swedish gingerbread that she enjoyed as a child. >



THESE PAGES (clockwise from above) Angela Viiga created the artwork behind the kitchen table, which was custom-made for this space, along with the benches, by Glenn Hogg at Basement; through the doorway in the lounge is one of two paintings by Marise Maas in the house – the Danish artist is a favourite with Nikki. The alcoves in the living room are filled with decorations; Kevin and Nikki have a particular penchant for balsa wood decorations and have picked up several throughout the years; the nativity scene was bought in Senegal. Mia and Nikki curl up together in a Republic Home armchair.



“My mum always used to make pepparkakor when we were kids,” says Nikki. “You make it in different shapes and put a hole in the pieces, ice them with the initials of everyone’s names and hang them from the Christmas tree.”

The Denholm daughters each have their own Christmas tree in their bedrooms (Lulu and Isabella’s trees are white, Mia’s is hot pink), which they can decorate “however they like,” says Nikki. They also each have a Danish advent calendar plus a shared one. “Every day of December there’s a different note or lolly or Bible verse that they read at night before bed.” >

THESE PAGES (clockwise from top left) Kevin bought the wall clock on a trip to Paris: “It’s almost the only colour in the house,” says Nikki, with a laugh. Mia sits beside a fairy light Christmas tree; the dolls are Danish advent calendars with 24 pockets in their dresses, which Nikki fills with lollies and trinkets. Lulu and Isabella made the advent calendar on the kitchen wall for Mia – each pocket contains a note or Bible verse; Isabella is making a chocolate treat to go with Nikki’s pepparkakor. The handmade Hawaiian lamp has a painted shade; Nikki’s mum helped make the stockings.







THIS PAGE (clockwise from top) The illustration above the gas fireplace by Niuean artist, novelist and poet John Pule reads: "Thanks to God that we have made it to this day" and was a present for Nikki from Kevin on her 30th birthday. Potted hydrangeas in the main bathroom.

OPPOSITE Isabella decorates her less traditional Christmas tree with yellow hibiscus flowers and baubles in keeping with her colour scheme.

A week before Christmas the family gathers for a “gratefulness night”. “We do a dinner, just the five of us,” says Nikki, “and we talk about the year and all of the things that we’re grateful for and give each other our personal gifts.”

The Christmas tree, which is selected as early as mid-November (“It’s occasionally been dead by Christmas Day, so I have had to go and buy another one, much to my husband’s horror”), is decorated with precious pieces that Nikki and Kevin have collected on their many overseas trips.

The couple are away several months of each year, filming and photographing campaigns for their film company, Exposure. “I think I’ve worked in nearly 50 countries,” says Nikki, whose

primary focus is humanitarian projects dealing with issues such as human trafficking and maternal health. “It’s pretty sobering, but it’s very important work and rewarding. It’s what we love.”

Nikki says that the couple’s decorating style has been hugely influenced by their travels: Danish artworks, a delicately painted lampshade with an intricately carved base that came from Hawaii (“This is one of the things I would save if we ever had a fire,” says Nikki), several crosses and two very old goatskin Bibles from Ethiopia, which Nikki nominates as one of her favourite countries.

“It has such an amazing cultural history. And there’s the life and joy and humanity and soul that you get in Africa.”

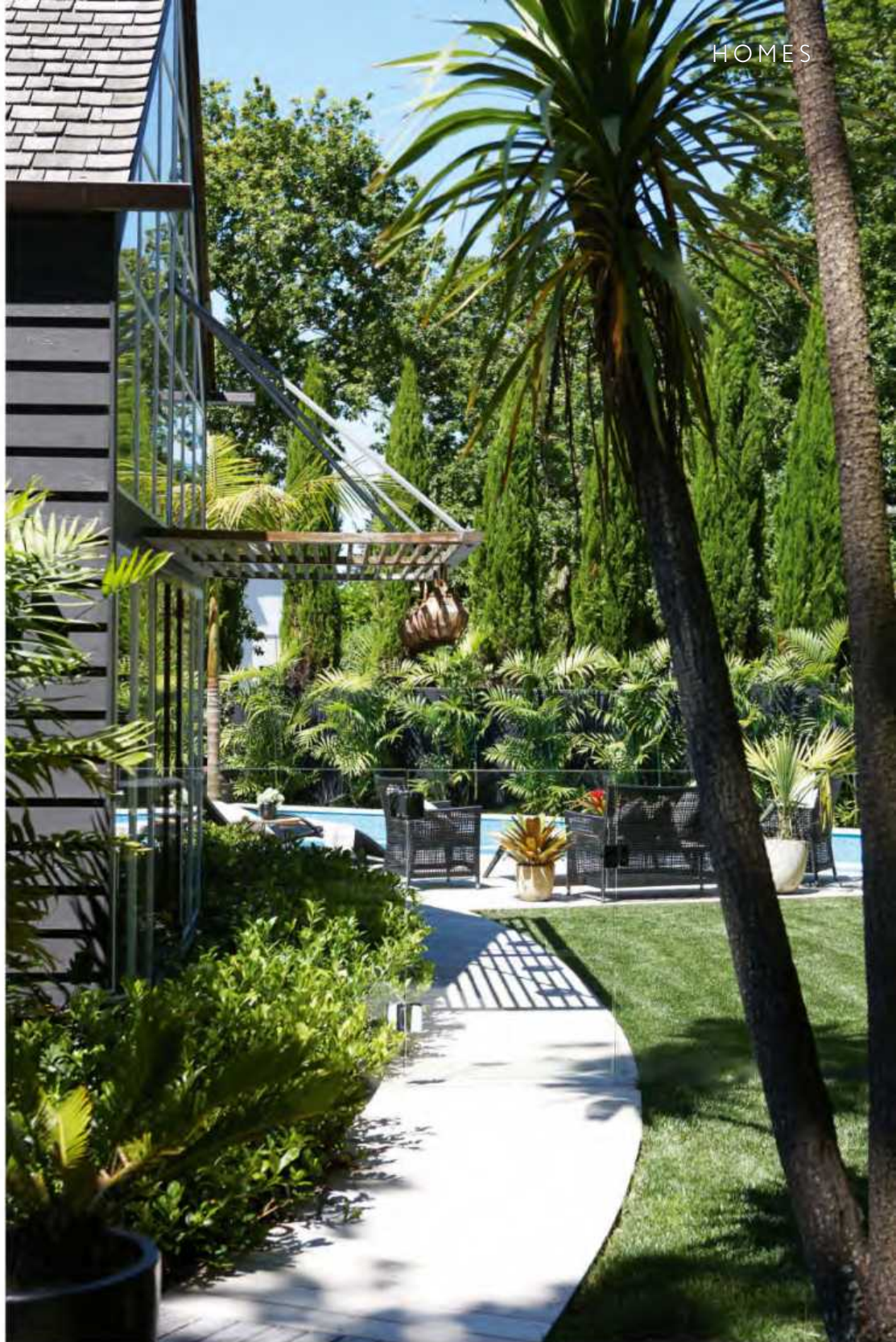
“WE HAVE A CHRISTIAN FAITH, SO CHRISTMAS IS QUITE SPECIAL FROM THAT PERSPECTIVE, AND THEN THERE’S THE FACT THAT WE JUST LOVE CELEBRATIONS!”





THIS PAGE Landscape designer Tony Murrell designed the pool area: "It's really relaxed and casual," says Nikki. "During the holidays there are always lots of kids hanging out. They love it!"

OPPOSITE (from top) Nikki and Kevin saw this wooden sculpture by Ray Haydon in the process of being made when they visited his workshop. The enclosed internal courtyard provides a peaceful sanctuary from hectic workdays; it's a place to escape for a cup of tea accompanied by the trickling sounds of the water feature in the foreground.



Although the house seems to fit the family like a glove, it actually took them a while to settle into it, says Nikki. Designed by noted architect Simon Carnachan for a couple with strong South African links, who were inspired by that country's lodges, the house consists of four pitched-roofed pavilions, which are arranged in a semicircle around a central courtyard. The pavilions are connected by three gently curving walkways.

"I think that this is a house we had to learn to work with and to respect, as opposed to doing our own thing," says Nikki.

When they first arrived, she and Kevin were so worried that the sheer number of windows would mean they would freeze in winter that they panicked and put in two heat pumps. "And then, to our absolute surprise, winter came and the house completely filled with sun." >



THIS PAGE The wreath on the front door is made from seashells; over the Christmas period, the lantern to the left of the door is set out with a large candle inside, which is lit when the family is entertaining; white hydrangeas are a favourite with Nikki.

The house has very few rooms in the four-walls-and-a-door sense of the word and “it probably took us a year or two to really understand it. It’s a bit different – very much one space. But it’s lovely with teenagers; we always have all these kids here and we can all see each other. No one goes into a room and shuts off.”

It’s also what makes the house such a special place to entertain. “When you’re in the kitchen you can see into almost every other room,” says Nikki. “It’s perfect.” ■

Q&A

MY BEST CHRISTMAS MEMORY: Definitely waking up on Christmas morning with my two sisters and feeling the heavy Christmas Santa stockings at the ends of our beds! The anticipation ends and the excitement begins...

MY DECORATING STYLE IS: Fun – a reflection of our life and travels – relatively monochromatic and probably a little Nordic.

MY FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS TRADITION: A swim in the ocean before breakfast with my dad.

WE INCLUDE OUTDOOR SPACES IN OUR CELEBRATIONS BY: Bringing the inside out – we eat around a big outside table, cook on an outdoor fire/barbecue, string outdoor fairy lights everywhere. We also bring the outside in with potted flowers and greenery from the garden everywhere.

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS FLOWERS: So many. I love white hibiscus and hydrangeas, pohutukawa, gardenia and frangipani.

Nikki Denholm

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Our winning room revealed

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Port Ohope

Meet Vanessa Webb, the winner of the Dulux and Master Painters ultimate makeover competition. Collaborating with interior designer Alex Fulton, Vanessa was able to achieve a coastal, contemporary vibe with clever bands of colour, beautifully finished by master painter Henri Janssen



Opposite page: Base coat on the striped verandah floor is Dulux St Clair; other colours used for the stripes include Dulux Blue Prince, Oxford, Storm Petrel, Port Ohope and Pink Stock. Vanessa also won a Freedom Furniture voucher, which she spent on outdoor furniture. Left: Bedroom in Dulux St Clair and Pink Stock. Right and below: Vanessa Webb and her verandah.



“Vanessa was the dream client... she was very interactive with the design process and had her own ideas and flair incorporated into the final plan. It was such a fun project and amazing to see the final look pulled together”

– Designer Alex Fulton

Vanessa Webb was desperate to make over the master bedroom in the Kapiti Coast home she and her husband bought last year. “But, when you’ve got a family, the master bedroom is the last thing you want to spend money on,” she says. The bedroom connects to a large verandah, so Dulux Colour Ambassador Alex Fulton helped come up with a plan to

link the two areas. Most of the walls, as well as the door, window trims and ceiling, were painted in Dulux St Clair, creating an uncomplicated feel and reflecting Vanessa’s love for the laid-back coastal vibe. “We wanted to add an element of surprise, so the punch comes from the pink band of colour on the walls and ceiling of the bedroom and the multi-striped verandah floor,” says Alex.



Designer: Alex Fulton from Alex Fulton Design, www.alexfultondesign.com

Styling: Vanessa Webb from Dress My Nest, www.dressmynest.co.nz

Painter/decorator: Henri Janssen from Henri Janssen Painting & Decorating Ltd, www.janssenpainters.co.nz

Photographer: Elizabeth Goodall

Paint: Dulux

Vanessa Webb is the winner of the beinspired.dulux competition. The prize included an ultimate room makeover with Master Painters New Zealand Association and Dulux NZ. Vanessa also received \$2000 to spend at Freedom Furniture to complete the look.



For more information visit dulux.co.nz

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Beginning again

More than a decade of hard graft has gone into this glorious Canterbury property, complete with truffles and hens, where family gather for Christmas

WORDS **SUE ALLISON** / PHOTOGRAPHS **JULIET NICHOLAS**



THIS PAGE In Sara and Rod Buchanan's Ohoka, North Canterbury potager, the single pink blooms of *Rosa* 'Complicata' glow behind bushes of purple sage and catmint; the oak trees in the background bear thousands of acorns, which a neighbour collects to feed her deer in winter, and will soon produce a more exotic crop in the form of truffles; the white doves fit in with the Buchanan's low-maintenance menagerie – they're concrete.

OPPOSITE An archway of *Clematis montana* 'Alba' frames the trellised gazebo at the end of the potager, which opens at the back to accommodate vehicles, including trailer-loads of pig manure; the table is a sunny spot for a break from gardening, says Sara.





THIS PAGE (clockwise from top left) The metal table and chairs beside the front entrance were an optimistic Christmas present to each other a few years ago, but the Buchanans rarely sit down. "Hollyhocks look so regal in the back of herbaceous borders," says Sara, who has planted dozens of varieties, including this black-eyed maroon one. Peony 'Coral Sunset' opens a flaming pink and fades almost to cream. Sara and Rod Buchanan. **OPPOSITE** The view south from the terrace on the west side of the house looks through to an orchard of truffle-infused hazelnut trees; wine barrels are handy places to leave your mug or glass, as well as pot stands for easy-care succulents.

ROD BUCHANAN IS CURIOUS to see what his wife, Sara, has in store for him this Christmas. Last year she gave him a big ball of rusty barbed wire. After 40 years of marriage, Rod knew the drill. "He said, 'Just what I always wanted' without hesitating," says Sara, who had spotted the rustic sculpture at the Culverden Fete and knew it would be perfect in their North Canterbury garden.

When the Buchanans bought their 2ha block in the Ohoka Park Truffière in 2003, it had neither house nor garden – just, Sara recalls, "a trillion dandelions" and 175 oak and hazelnut seedlings, their roots inoculated with truffle fungus (and now beginning to bear the final product).

They named the property Oberau after the Austrian village where they worked as ski instructors in the 1970s, and where Rod proposed to Sara. Three decades on, the name again heralded new beginnings. The prospect of tackling such a huge project in your mid-50s would be daunting for most people, but Rod and Sara, who had spent the previous 15 years on a 10ha lifestyle block nearby, raising sheep, cattle and two children, saw it as a chance to simplify life without moving to town. >







THESE PAGES Weather permitting, the family will gather on the large terrace for Christmas dinner, under a canopy of ornamental grapes; the terrace looks across the lawn to the pond and mountains beyond: "The sunsets here are beautiful," says Sara; the long table, actually two butted together, was designed by Sara and made by "local genius" Bromley Light, using slabs of Oamaru stone set in a metal frame; green glasses and Portuguese leaf plates give a natural look to the alfresco setting. >





THIS PAGE (clockwise from top) The 'Golden Celebration' rose clambering over the barn, which is attached to the hen house, was a present from a friend for the Buchanans' silver wedding anniversary: "Just a bit early," says Sara. She hangs the watering can on the manuka pole bean rack so she doesn't lose it; brassicas, lettuces and rhubarb thrive in the vegetable garden: "Rod says, 'Do we need 30 rhubarb plants?' But it's a lovely thing to give away." Brown shaver hens enjoy eating excess vegetables in return for eggs. An artichoke flower.

OPPOSITE Arches of *Clematis montana* 'Alba' (foreground) and David Austin's 'Trier' rose punctuate the lime-chip path from the potager to the house.





“PEOPLE AND PLANTS ARE MY PASSION... EVEN WHEN THE CHILDREN WERE LITTLE, I WOULD TRY TO DO A BUCKET OF WEEDS A DAY”

“We were too young to spend our days walking around the park and visiting coffee shops,” says Rod. “We wanted to stay out here and it was a real perk finding something big enough to have space without having to have livestock. It’s hard to get away when you have animals to look after.”

The final catalyst for the move was a phone call from their son Guy, who was flatting in Christchurch. “He said he was thinking of bringing some friends out and asked if the tennis court was marked, the pool was clean and there were beers in fridge. I thought, ‘Oh, so this is my new role in life’.”

At Oberau, they have traded the pool for a large pond teeming with bird life, the pasture for an immaculate lawn of Chewing’s fescue and the sheep and cattle for six brown shaver hens and several thousand tiger worms. “It’s almost lock-up-and-go,” says Sara. “We’ve now got that freedom.” The next item on the wish list is a caravan.

The one thing Oberau has in common with their old place is a large garden. Sara’s motto is, “People and plants are my passion”. She loves gardening and there’s no stopping her. “Even when the children were little, I would try to do a bucket of weeds a day,”

she says, even if meant taking a light outside on an extension cord after dark.

A familiar sight for Ohoka commuters is that of a figure clad in a red anorak gardening in the rain. Sara is a farm girl from Franz Josef, one of the wettest places in New Zealand, so she isn’t deterred by a bit of precipitation. “It’s the perfect time to transplant things, as you don’t have to water them, though sometimes I hide so people don’t say, ‘There’s that mad woman still out in the garden’.”

She has underplanted the trees at the front with thousands of tulips and daffodils. “I planted them en masse to give that intensity of spring rather than dotted through the garden.” Poppies and wildflowers are strewn through them for colour in summer. Artichokes have also been mass-planted. “I chose them because they have spectacular flowers and foliage and the frost doesn’t knock them.”

The Buchanans have a clear division of labour. Rod mows, sprays and trims the hedges; Sara plants and weeds. “Rod loathes weeding, but will help if I’m showing signs of stress before a garden tour.” >



THIS PAGE (from top) "I love flowers and vegetables together," says Sara of her herbaceous borders in the potager; the rose 'Trier' grows over a pergola at the entrance and the edges are lined with informal plantings of heuchera and catmint. The entrance to the Mediterranean-style house is lined with thujas, and mass-plantings of 'Super' lavender and clipped choisya (Mexican orange blossom) hedges flank the drive.

OPPOSITE Rod's present from last Christmas, a barbed wire ball, adorns a memorial garden to their beloved pets, Lily the cat and Sophie the golden retriever.



Q & A

TYPE OF GARDEN: Large country garden with extensive lawns, herbaceous borders, a pond and potager, as well as oak and hazelnut trees planted for truffle production. (Both)

CLIMATE: Typical Canterbury east coast climate with warm nor'west winds from October to December and frosty mornings from May to September with sunny days to follow. (Rod)

WE'RE ECO-FRIENDLY BECAUSE: Solar power heats the water and a clear-water sewage system irrigates the garden. (Both)

THIS CHRISTMAS WE'LL BE EATING: Turkey, ham and all the trimmings with new potatoes, peas and carrots from the garden, followed by berries, pavlova, hazelnut gateau and ice cream. (Both)

FIRST THING WE DO ON CHRISTMAS MORNING: Having prayed for a fine day, a church service followed by brunch, bubbles and presents. (Both)

DO YOU OPEN YOUR GARDEN TO THE PUBLIC? We've been in several garden tours and during summer we have wedding photography, as well as guests staying in our B&B rooms. (Sara)

I HOPE SANTA BRINGS ME: A pair of secateurs and gardening gloves to replace the many lost in the garden rubbish. (Sara)

Rod and Sara Buchanan

The large vegetable garden is common turf. "It's so satisfying to eat a meal and know you have grown it," says Sara. Over summer, they run a B&B and overseas guests are regularly astonished to be eating vegetables that were in the garden 25 minutes earlier. "One American woman said to her husband, 'Can you believe they've got wild potatoes in that yard!'"

Nothing is wasted and the Buchanans are fervidly "green". As well as the chooks and worm farm, they have seven compost bins. ("Composting is so satisfying, like making a pavlova," says Sara.) The bee-friendly garden includes catmint borders and a bed of phacelia (purple tansy), as well as 100 'Grosso' lavender bushes lining the drive, and they are keen to add hives to their low-maintenance but productive menagerie.

On Christmas Day, Rod will have stocked the fridge with bubbles when Guy turns up, not with a bunch of mates, but with the best present ever – his wife Niamh and their new baby, the Buchanans' first granddaughter. Once the festivities are over, Rod and Sara will don their gardening gear and start getting things shipshape for daughter Annabel's late summer garden wedding.

It seems the passing years might have brought new roles that aren't all bad and, come autumn, Sara and Rod might just hitch up that caravan and head off to a quiet fishing spot... ■



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THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE

It's not just the present that counts, but also the presentation

WORDS JANICE MARRIOTT & VIRGINIA PAWSEY / ILLUSTRATION PIPPA FAY

DEAR JANICE



I have a conundrum for you. Should we wrap our Christmas presents or should we help save the planet by not wasting metres of decorative paper that ends up being scrunched into rubbish bins? I know I sound like the Christmas Grinch, but it's an issue that has bothered me for years.

To appease my conscience, presents wrapped in heavy expensive paper are opened very carefully and I reuse it for family presents the following year. I save ribbons and bows too. I know the recycled paper looks second-hand, but it is a salute to the conservation ethic and certainly not as grinchy as an environmentalist I know who wraps her Christmas presents in newspaper. I think that is a salute too far.

Wrapping presents in festive paper does create that wonderful sense of Christmas anticipation we all enjoy, but I wonder why we bother if the recipient already knows what is going to be in the parcel. Gifts to order are practical, but it's much more fun to surprise and be surprised. Choosing a gift that surprises and delights is not easy though, and we don't always get it right.

Harry once failed to thrill – or surprise – me with an unsolicited Christmas present. Luckily for me, surprises are often sabotaged in the country. On Christmas Eve day the phone rang. "Garry. GVT. That mower of Harry's. We can't pick it up. I've rung Fletchers." Ten minutes later the phone rang again. "Hilt here. Fletchers. Where do you want that mower?" "I think it might be a surprise Christmas present," I said. "Drop it at the sheds and, if you see Harry, please don't tell him I know about it."

On Christmas morning, a beaming Harry mowed his way to the living room door with my "surprise" present. I was very grateful for the prior warning. I'd been able to practise looking delighted and surprised with my new self-propelled lawnmower all night. Are you hoping to be surprised on Christmas morning?

Virginia

DEAR VIRGINIA



Presents must be wrapped. The element of surprise is what a present is all about. Remember how children creep into the lounge when they think no one is looking and examine the shape, weight and size of parcels under the tree, trying to figure out what lies beneath? Remember the old days of LPs?

They were so obvious! No way to disguise them. The problem presents to disguise now are the pot plant for Grandma, some sharp garden tool for Dad, a bottle of something for Grandad.

This Christmas we are planning to wrap all our presents in brown paper from a large roll bought at The Warehouse but that is just the beginning. We can dye the paper, glue pictures or photos on it, fold it in creative ways. The idea is to amaze the receiver with not just the present but the presentation as well.

Because we decided on this some time ago, I've been collecting a basket of "useful things" – funny or lovely family photos printed out so they can be collaged and glued onto the paper, ribbons and bows, odd baubles and fancy cardboard for labels. I might unpick a lei from the \$2 shop and use the flowers as decoration (I learned this trick from kindly). Tane has collected colourful milk bottle tops, because he wants all presents to be on wheels. He's going to sellotape them to the paper.

The presents that will call for the greatest wrapping creativity will be those for the teenagers – the gift cards. I think I might bury one inside a large carton full of balloons and popcorn. But how shall I decorate the brown paper wrapping? I'll have to think of something extraordinary.

The only problem will be managing the kids wielding sticky tape, glue sticks, paint and the dreaded stapler. Gun staplers were long ago banished in this home and office after my son and I spent Christmas in A&E, waiting to get a staple out of his thumb nail. He returned home wrapped up like a parcel – in bandages.

A very merry and pain-free Christmas to you and yours!

Janice

I want an
island kitchen...



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SOME THINGS SHOULD BE KEPT SACRED



SACRED HILL
VINEYARDS

FESTIVE FEASTS

A MERRY SPREAD

*A fabulous, fuss-free
three-course menu*

RELAXED REPAST

*Casual Christmas fare
from the barbecue*

FROM MY KITCHEN

*Easy and clever
home-made gifts*

SMALL BITES

*Our food editor's
festive tips*

BUFFET MENU

PASSIONFRUIT &
PINEAPPLE COCKTAILS

*SALMON TARTARE WITH
CUCUMBER & WASABI*

OAT BISCUITS

*HASSELBACK POTATOES
WITH GARLIC, HERB &
PARMESAN CRUMB*

CIDER-GLAZED HAM
WITH STAR ANISE

*SPICED CHERRY & CIDER
COMPOTE*

MIXED BERRY & JELLY
TRIFLE

*Serves 8-10, with some leftovers
for post-Christmas picking*



A merry spread

This *three-course* menu, plus cocktails, provides a *fabulous yet relaxed* festive meal that will impress with *minimal stress*

RECIPES & FOOD STYLING **BERNADETTE HOGG**

STYLING **CLAUDIA KOZUB**

PHOTOGRAPHS **MANJA WACHSMUTH**



PLAN AHEAD

For cooks who like to be well organised:
Up to 10 days ahead: Bake Oat Biscuits. Make sourdough crumbs (for potatoes) and freeze.

Up to a week ahead: Make Spiced Cherry & Cider Compote.

1-2 days ahead: Make cocktail base, ham glaze and Mixed Berry & Jelly Trifle. Toast sesame seeds (for salmon starter).

On the day:

3 hours before serving: Prepare salmon ingredients. Make crumb topping for potatoes and prepare potatoes for baking.

1-2 hours ahead: Glaze and cook ham.

About 1 hour ahead: Take compote from fridge. Combine salmon and dressing and return to fridge. Cook potatoes (and any other vegetables of choice).

SUGGESTED EXTRA VEGETABLE SIDE DISHES:

You could simply include a leafy green salad with this menu, but these three dishes would also be perfect:

- **Warm Greens Salad** Dressing can be made hours ahead; cook vegetables close to serving. (See nzhouseandgarden.co.nz for recipe or our December 2010 issue.)
- **Carrot, Orange & Pomegranate Salad** Ingredients and dressing can be prepared hours ahead; combine them close to serving. (See website for recipe or December 2010.)
- **Pea & Kaffir Lime Leaf Mash** Prepare flavour additions hours ahead; cook peas close to serving. (See recipe page 124.)





PASSIONFRUIT & PINEAPPLE COCKTAILS

This recipe makes enough base for about 15 long cocktails or 30 champagne cocktails. Passionfruit vodka is available from bottle stores – two local brands are 42Below and Famous Vodka.

2 cups passionfruit vodka
230g jar passionfruit in syrup, strained to remove seeds
6 limes, juiced
1 litre good-quality pineapple juice
6 passionfruit
Ice and soda water or champagne for serving
Lime wedges for garnish

Combine passionfruit vodka, passionfruit syrup, lime juice, pineapple juice and pulp from the fresh passionfruit. Cover and refrigerate.

Serve in individual glasses with ice, topped up with soda water to taste and

garnished with wedges of lime. Or serve with chilled champagne to taste (omitting ice and lime garnish). *Makes 2 litres cocktail base*

SALMON TARTARE WITH CUCUMBER & WASABI

Serve this delicious starter with a side of oat biscuits (recipe follows). The ingredients and the dressing can be prepared ahead but do not combine them more than 1-2 hours before serving, as the lime juice will “cook” the salmon.

700g skinned and boned fresh salmon fillet
¼ telegraph cucumber
3 shallots, peeled and very finely chopped
1 tablespoon snipped chives
2 tablespoons chopped coriander leaves
1 thumb ginger, peeled and grated
3 limes, juiced
½-1 tablespoon wasabi paste (to taste)

1 tablespoon olive oil
½ teaspoon sesame oil
⅓ cup good-quality mayonnaise
2 teaspoons sesame seeds, lightly toasted

Cut salmon into 0.5cm cubes. Cut unpeeled cucumber into 0.5cm cubes, discarding seeds. Place salmon, cucumber, shallots, herbs and ginger in a non-reactive bowl.

Combine lime juice, wasabi, oils and mayonnaise. Mix gently into ingredients in the bowl and season well with flaky sea salt and pepper (preferably white). Cover and refrigerate 1-2 hours before serving.

Serve sprinkled with toasted sesame seeds, accompanied by lime wedges and pickled ginger on the side if desired. *Serves 8-10 as a starter with biscuits*

Cook's tip: Chilling the fish in the freezer until it is very cold makes it easier to slice.

OAT BISCUITS

These biscuits keep well – up to 10 days in an airtight container.

1 cup wholemeal flour
½ cup plain flour
1 cup wholegrain oats, plus extra for sprinkling
½ teaspoon white pepper
½ teaspoon flaky sea salt
2 tablespoons brown sugar
½ teaspoon baking soda
80g butter, melted
¼ cup milk
1 egg, lightly beaten, for brushing

Heat oven to 190°C. Line a baking tray with baking paper. Place flours, oats, pepper, salt, sugar and baking soda in a large bowl and mix to combine. Add melted butter and milk, mixing to form a firm but pliable dough (you may need to add a little extra milk if mixture is dry).

Roll out dough on a lightly floured surface to 3mm thick. Cut into rectangles or small rounds using a floured cookie cutter, re-rolling and cutting any scraps. Place on prepared trays.

Brush biscuits with a little beaten egg and sprinkle with a few oats. Bake 10-12 minutes until edges are just golden. Remove to a wire rack to cool completely. *Makes about 30 x 6cm round biscuits* >



HASSELBACK POTATOES WITH GARLIC, HERB & PARMESAN CRUMB

We can thank Stockholm's Hasselbacken restaurant for this scrumptious treatment for potatoes (Nigella likens them to having sautéed potatoes on the stem).

16 potatoes, medium and even-sized, peeled
50g butter, melted
3 tablespoons olive oil
6 large sprigs thyme
6 cloves garlic, unpeeled, smashed

Crumb:

1 cup stale sourdough breadcrumbs
(roughly grated or broken)
1 tablespoon finely grated parmesan
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 tablespoon finely chopped herbs, eg thyme,
rosemary, parsley
2 tablespoons olive oil

Heat oven to 200°C. Make crumb mix by combining all the crumb ingredients in a bowl. Spread onto a lined baking tray and bake until crisp and golden.

Remove a small slice from under each potato to enable them to sit flat. Using a sharp knife, make cuts three-quarters of the way through the potatoes at 0.5cm intervals all the way along the top.

Place potatoes in a large bowl. Combine melted butter, olive oil, thyme sprigs and smashed garlic cloves. Pour over potatoes, season with flaky sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, and toss to combine.

Transfer potatoes to a baking pan, sitting them flat, and roast 50-60 minutes until golden and cooked. (Crumb mix and potatoes can be cooked at the same time if desired, and if you have a fan oven.)

Serve the potatoes scattered with the crumb. *Serves 8-10*

CIDER-GLAZED HAM WITH STAR ANISE

A glazed ham makes a handsome centrepiece for a meal and provides a relatively fuss-free way to feed a large gathering. We used a 7kg ham, which is big enough for about 24 servings.

1 cooked leg of ham
1 cup apple cider
½ cup water
12 whole star anise, for garnish

Glaze:

¾ cup apple cider
1 cup dark cane sugar
¼ cup liquid honey
¼ cup Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
1 teaspoon each: ground cinnamon, coriander
and ginger
½ teaspoon ground cloves
2 tablespoons rum

Heat oven to 180°C. Line a large roasting pan with foil or baking paper.

Using a small, very sharp knife, cut a line around the shank end of the ham. Then, using your fingers, gently lift the rind, leaving a layer of fat covering the ham. Using the sharp knife, score the fat in a decorative pattern, trying not to cut into the pink flesh of the ham.

Glaze: Combine all ingredients except rum in a medium saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring until sugar and mustard dissolve (watch it doesn't boil over).

Reduce heat to a simmer for 5 minutes then remove pan from heat, add rum and leave glaze to cool and thicken slightly.

Place remaining 1 cup apple cider and the ½ cup water in roasting pan. Add ham then brush generously with cider glaze.

Cook for 60-80 minutes, basting with remaining glaze at 15-minute intervals. When glaze is golden and ham completely warmed through, remove from oven and stand at least 20 minutes before carving.

Garnish with the star anise (these will stick to the glaze with a firm press). Serve ham warm or at room temperature. *Serves a crowd >*





SPICED CHERRY & CIDER COMPOTE

- ½ cup dried tart cherries
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup pitted dried prunes
- ½ cup dried apricots
- 4 dried peaches
- 1 lemon, juice and peeled zest (no pith)
- ¼ cup dark cane sugar
- 2 whole small red dried (bird's-eye) chillies
- 2 whole cloves
- 1 whole star anise
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 cup apple cider
- 1 cup water
- 12 fresh cherries, pitted and halved

Combine all ingredients except fresh cherries in a large saucepan. Bring to the boil then cover and reduce heat to a simmer. Cook until fruit is puffed and tender (about 20 minutes).

Remove from heat and leave to stand for several hours to allow flavours to develop. Fold in fresh cherries. Serve at room temperature with the ham. Compote will keep covered in the fridge for up to a week. *Makes about 2½ cups*



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MIXED BERRY & JELLY TRIFLE

You will need a large trifle bowl for this big, beautiful dessert – one that's around 3.5 litres in capacity. Be sure to let the jelly layer fully set, perhaps overnight, before assembling the rest of the trifle.

Berry jelly layer:

- 2 packets berry-flavoured jelly crystals (we used raspberry and boysenberry)
- 1 teaspoon pink peppercorns (see page 163)
- 2 tablespoons white balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Cointreau
- 250g mixed berries, fresh or frozen

Vanilla bean custard:

- 8 egg yolks
- 150g caster sugar
- 500ml cream
- 100ml full-cream milk
- 1 vanilla pod, seeds scraped
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Chantilly cream:

- 300ml cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons icing sugar

To assemble:

- 500g mixed fresh berries
- 1 sponge (bought or home-made), to fit trifle bowl
- ¼ cup Cointreau

Berry jelly layer: Make jellies to packet directions but using ¼ cup less water than stated (3½ cups in total). Stir in peppercorns, balsamic vinegar and Cointreau. Leave to cool then pour into a 3.5-litre-capacity trifle bowl.

Leave jelly until it is slightly set then carefully add mixed berries (if frozen, do not thaw first). Allow to set completely.

Custard: Beat egg yolks and sugar together until very well combined. Place

cream and milk in a large saucepan, add vanilla seeds and extract and bring to a simmer (do not allow it to boil).

Take pan off heat and gradually whisk egg mixture into cream mixture. Return pan to a medium to low heat and cook, stirring, until custard will thickly coat the back of a spoon (do not boil). Strain through a sieve and cover surface with plastic wrap. Keep chilled until needed.

Chantilly cream: Beat cream with vanilla and icing sugar to firm peaks.

To assemble: Scatter about half the fresh berries over the jelly and top with half the custard. Add the sponge layer and drizzle with the Cointreau. Scatter remaining berries over (save some prize ones for the top of the trifle). Add remaining custard and finish with the cream layer. Garnish with reserved berries. *Serves 10-12* ■

Relaxed repast

Keep things *informal on Christmas Day* by cooking on the barbecue and serving help-yourself dishes that *don't skimp* on the *wow factor*

RECIPES & STYLING **BERNADETTE HOGG**
PHOTOGRAPHS **MANJA WACHSMUTH**

MARINATED BUTTERFLIED LEG OF LAMB

Start this recipe the day before as the lamb needs to marinate overnight. Serve it garnished with lemon halves charred on the barbecue and fresh rosemary sprigs.

1.5kg boned and butterflied leg of lamb

Marinade:

4 cloves garlic, crushed

1 thumb ginger, peeled and grated

1 tablespoon brown sugar

6 sprigs rosemary, crushed to bruise

1 tablespoon each: coriander and cumin seeds,
lightly toasted and ground

1 lemon, juice and finely grated zest

⅓ cup olive oil

Place all the marinade ingredients in a sealable plastic bag and season generously with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Add the lamb, seal the bag and toss to coat it in the marinade. Leave to marinate in the fridge overnight.

Before cooking, allow the lamb to return to room temperature.

Cook over a medium to high heat on the barbecue for 15-20 minutes each side (15 minutes for rare, 20 for medium rare).

Cover with foil and leave to stand for 15 minutes before slicing. *Serves 6* >

M E N U

MARINATED
BUTTERFLIED LEG
OF LAMB

POTTED BLUE CHEESE
& WALNUTS WITH
PINOT NOIR JELLY
& MUSCATELS

TOASTED BUCKWHEAT
SALAD WITH
ROASTED TRUSS
TOMATOES

PEA & KAFFIR LIME
LEAF MASH

CHOCOLATE &
AMARETTI SALAMI

Serves 6



CASUAL CHRISTMAS

POTTED BLUE CHEESE & WALNUTS WITH PINOT NOIR JELLY & MUSCATELS

This pre-dinner snack can be made several days before needed and stored covered in the fridge. If you can find them, smoked walnuts are delicious in it.

Potted cheese:

125g cream cheese

140g sour cream

140g strong blue cheese, eg Stilton, broken into pieces

50g walnut pieces, toasted

Pinot noir jelly:

¾ gelatin leaf

5 tablespoons pinot noir

1 teaspoon liquid honey

To serve:

Muscatel clusters (we used Tabletop Grapes brand from Farro; find out more on page 161)

Extra toasted walnuts

Thin toasts or oat biscuits (see recipe page 123)

Potted cheese: Combine cream cheese and sour cream in a food processor. Add blue cheese and toasted walnuts and process until just combined. Spoon into



a jar or dish, scatter with a few reserved walnuts if desired and place in the fridge.

Jelly: Soak gelatin leaf in cold water until soft. Place wine and honey in a small saucepan and heat while stirring until honey dissolves. Take off heat.

Squeeze excess water from gelatin

then stir into wine mix. Leave to cool until just starting to thicken.

Pour jelly over chilled cheese mixture and return to fridge until set.

Serve with clusters of muscatels, toasted walnuts and thin toasted bread or oat biscuits. *Makes about 2 cups*

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Toasted Buckwheat Salad with Roasted Truss Tomatoes

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TOASTED BUCKWHEAT SALAD WITH ROASTED TRUSS TOMATOES

This salad is packed with great textures and flavours. Roasted seed sprinkles are available at some supermarkets and speciality food stores. Alternatively, you can use toasted pumpkin seeds. Despite its name, hearty buckwheat is unrelated to wheat and is gluten-free.

Buckwheat salad:

1½ cups buckwheat
1 tablespoon cumin seeds
3 cups water
1 orange, finely grated zest
1 lemon, finely grated zest
5 young spring onions, thinly sliced
½ cup each: chopped mint, parsley and basil

½ cup dried cranberries
½ cup natural almonds, toasted and coarsely chopped
¼ cup pine nuts, lightly toasted
⅓ cup roasted seed sprinkles
2-3 bunches truss tomatoes, oven-roasted but still holding their shape

Dressing:

1 large lemon, juiced
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 teaspoons liquid honey
2 cloves garlic, crushed

Heat a medium frypan (one with a tight-fitting lid). Add buckwheat and stir for several minutes.

Add cumin seeds and stir for a further 2 minutes until buckwheat begins to colour and cumin is aromatic.

Add water and cover with lid. Bring to the boil then reduce to a simmer and cook until water has absorbed and buckwheat has softened, about 15 minutes. Take off heat and leave to cool slightly.

Toss the grains using a fork then add all remaining salad ingredients except tomatoes. Season to taste.

Combine dressing ingredients and toss through salad. Serve topped with the tomatoes.

Serves 6 >



PEA & KAFFIR LIME LEAF MASH

This is an easy way to make peas really tasty and special.

4 cups (500-600g) baby peas, fresh or frozen
2 cloves garlic, very finely sliced
4 tablespoons coconut cream
4 kaffir lime leaves, centre stem removed,
leaves very finely sliced
About 1 teaspoon fish sauce

Cook peas and sliced garlic in boiling salted water until tender. Drain well.

Add coconut cream and sliced lime leaves to peas. Roughly mash and season with fish sauce to taste. Serve garnished with pea shoots if desired. *Serves 6*

CHOCOLATE & AMARETTI SALAMI

Serve this sweet delight with a bowl of fresh berries for the perfect easy dessert. The salami can be made weeks ahead.

170g mixed dried fruit, roughly chopped (we used figs, sultanas and crystallised ginger)
1 tablespoon rum
100g butter, cubed
100g dark chocolate, broken into small pieces (at least 62% cocoa)
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup (220g) sweetened condensed milk
170g nuts, lightly toasted, roughly chopped (we used hazelnuts, pistachios and blanched almonds)
100g amaretti biscuits, coarsely crushed
70g red glacé cherries, left whole
2 tablespoons icing sugar

Place mixed dried fruit and rum in a bowl, mix well and set aside for 30 minutes to macerate.

Place butter, chocolate and condensed milk in a large microwave-safe bowl. Heat at 20-second intervals, stirring well in between, until the mixture is smooth and melted.

Mix in the macerated fruit, nuts, biscuits and cherries.

Divide mixture between 2 large sheets of baking paper and form into logs, twisting the ends of the paper to seal into a tight sausage shape. Chill overnight.

Roll salami in the icing sugar to coat. Cut into thin slices for serving. Salami will keep for several weeks in a sealed container in the fridge. *Makes 2 logs* ■



ORANGE
POMANDERS

Clove-studded oranges look and smell beautiful and can be hung or used as a table decoration. They are best made no more than a day or two before needed (they do not last well in hot weather). Use a satay stick to pierce small holes in an **orange** in your desired pattern then press whole **cloves** into the piercings and add ribbon or string as desired.

Love from my kitchen

Give a gift from *the heart* using these
easy and clever home-made ideas

RECIPES & STYLING **BERNADETTE HOGG**
PHOTOGRAPHS **MANJA WACHSMUTH**

HONEYCOMB

This old-fashioned hokey-pokey sweet is extra special dipped in or drizzled with chocolate. Place 130g **caster sugar**, 4 tablespoons **golden syrup** and 1 teaspoon **white vinegar** in a medium pot and cook, stirring, until sugar dissolves. Bring to the boil and cook until a rich, dark, golden colour – 2-3 minutes – swirling the pot from time to time. Take off heat and quickly stir in 2 teaspoons **baking soda**. Immediately pour into a lined or greased baking tray (don't be tempted to spread it). Break into pieces when cold. Honeycomb will keep in a sealed container between layers of baking paper for 2-3 weeks.





DRIED FRUIT DECORATIONS

To dry **apples** and **oranges** for decorations such as this wreath, thinly slice the fruit into rounds (a mandoline works well for the apples). Place on lined baking trays and bake at 140°C until completely dry, about 50 minutes, turning the fruit and trays halfway through. The wreath, made from 18-gauge galvanised wire, is threaded with dried apples and oranges, fresh **bay leaves**, **cinnamon sticks** and **nutmegs** (holes were drilled through these). It will last several weeks hung in a cool, dry place – the leaves and fruit will continue to dry over this time.

TIERED SPONGE WITH BERRIES

CHA TEA MIX

Wonderful as a hot drink with milk or served black and chilled over ice in summer. On a baking tray place 24 split **cardamom pods**, a teaspoon each of **pink and black peppercorns**, a couple of tablespoons of **fennel seeds**, a teaspoon each whole **cloves** and **coriander seeds** and 4 **cinnamon sticks**. Bake for 5 minutes in a moderate oven. Cool then lightly crush the spices and toss with 1 cup black tea leaves and a few tablespoons of chopped **crystallised ginger**. Package into bags with a note to infuse 1 tablespoon in half a cup of boiling water, top with hot milk and sweeten to taste with honey. >



PICKLING SPICE
BLEND

The perfect, thoughtful little gift for friends who enjoy making pickles and relishes. In a bowl combine 4 crushed **cinnamon sticks**, 8 crushed **bay leaves**, a tablespoon each of whole **cloves**, dried red **chillies** (or flakes), **cardamom pods** and **juniper berries**. Add 2 tablespoons each of whole **allspice** and **dill seeds**. Finish by mixing in 4 tablespoons each of **yellow** and **black mustard seeds**, **black peppercorns** and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup whole **coriander seeds**. Store in airtight jars; mix will keep for several months. Use as you would a commercial blend.





PICKLED STONE FRUIT

Delicious with ham and other cold meats (and really good with vanilla ice cream), this is an ideal gift to take to a Christmas brunch, lunch or dinner. The fruit is best made several weeks ahead to allow the flavours to develop. Place 2 cups **cider vinegar** in a large pot with 500g **caster sugar** and stir over medium heat until sugar dissolves. Add 500g dried (plump) **stone fruit**, 2 dried red **chillies** and 5 **star anise**. Bring to the boil then simmer until liquid is syrupy. Spoon fruit into sterilised jars, pour syrup over, leave to cool then seal. Store in a cool, dark cupboard. Once open, keep in the fridge. *Makes 4-5 cups* ■





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SMALL BITES

Shopping news and seasonal tips from
food editor Sally Butters

Learn about: MUSCATELS

Muscatel raisins are made from muscat grapes – the same family of grapes used to make sweet wines such as asti and moscato. The grapes, of which there are about 200 different varieties, ranging in colour from white to brown to nearly black, are known for their spicy sweetness and rich, musky, flowery perfume. Roman author Pliny declared them “the grape of the bees”. Dried muscat grapes – muscatels – are delicious devoured with nuts and cheese and a glass of dessert wine. They’re a traditional favourite for festive snacking, especially the ones purchased in withered little clusters where the grapes have been dried while still on their stems. Muscatels can also be soaked in brandy or cognac and added to cakes and desserts. The warm Mediterranean is the ancestral home of muscat grapes but our supplies of muscatels usually come from Australia and California.

Look for them in specialist food shops such as Farro in Auckland, which sells the Australian Tabletop brand. If you can source fresh muscat grapes next autumn you could easily make your own muscatels, either in a dehydrator or very low oven – instructions can be found online.

Try muscatels with Potted Blue Cheese & Walnuts with Pinot Noir Jelly (see the recipe on page 152).



DID YOU KNOW...

Pink peppercorns aren't actually peppercorns at all but the aromatic dried berries of schinus trees. Softer than true peppercorns, they have papery skins and a mildly fruity, delicately sweet and peppery flavour. We've used them to liven up the berry jelly in our Christmas trifle – you'll find the recipe on page 149. Dried pink peppercorns can be found in delis and some supermarkets. They are also sold pickled in brine.



I'M LOVING...



FLAMIGNI PANETTONE If you dislike traditional Christmas cake, Italian panettone is a lighter, less sugary alternative. It is also one of the few cakes to defy the rule that shop-bought is never as good as home-made. Sabato imports the best from Flamigni, in beautiful packaging. \$72.50 (1kg), sabato.co.nz.

ROSANNA PLATEAU À GÂTEAU This pedestal tower of six footed plates stacks to create a stunning centrepiece or separates into elegant serving dishes or candleholders. White porcelain and gold, total stacked height 30cm, \$230 (comes gift-boxed). See oldmillroad.co for stockists.



REINDEER ROLLING PIN This beech wood, 45cm-long (including handles), laser-engraved rolling pin is made in Poland. Use it to emboss cookies, pastry and fondant. US\$35 plus postage from Valek Rolling Pins at etsy.com.



FENTIMANS SOFT DRINKS The fermentation process used to brew these British soft drinks gives them a unique taste. Flavoured with botanical infusions, varieties include Rose Lemonade, Wild English Elderflower, and Mandarin & Seville Orange Jigger. \$2 per 275ml. Distributed by Hancocks, (09) 361 8400.

BENNETT OPIES BABY PEARS

Preserved in syrup flavoured with Luxardo Amaretto, an Italian almond liqueur, these small, whole fruits are delicious with anything creamy and look super cute on cakes and desserts. \$6 per 460g jar. Call (04) 974 6454 for stockists. >



Enjoy now: MERINGUE

- Meringues and pavlova are firm festive favourites – perhaps it's because their snowiness reminds us of a traditional Christmas.
- There are two basic meringue types: Swiss and Italian. For Swiss meringue – used for the likes of pavlova – egg whites are beaten then sugar is gradually added. For Italian meringue – the meringue of choice for frozen and chilled desserts, and frosting cakes – hot sugar syrup is whipped into the whites, semi-cooking and stabilising the mixture.
- Crunchy, gossamery meringues, the way our grandmothers used to make them, are the result of long, slow cooking at very low heat – dried out rather than baked.
- Some meringues are cooked at high temperatures to seal and colour the outside, leaving a spongy, moist centre – for example, on a meringue-topped pie.
- Meringues can also be poached in milk, such as in the French classic Oeufs à la Neige (snow eggs).
- The key to making any good meringue is volume. Traditionalists swear by a copper bowl – apparently the tiny particles of copper help to increase the volume – and intensive beating by hand. An electric mixer with a balloon whisk attachment is far easier and does an excellent job.
- To maximise volume, squeaky-clean equipment is vital. Plastic bowls, which tend to absorb grease, are best avoided.
- The bowl shape affects aeration too. A wide bottom prevents the whole mass of whites from moving constantly. A narrow-based bowl with high sides works best.
- Eggs beat to greatest volume at room temperature, but they separate most easily when cold.
- Use nature's tool, a broken eggshell, to scoop out any yellow flecks from the separated whites.
- Egg whites that have been frozen will still whisk well, but be sure to use them at room temperature.
- Two common problems with meringue-making are weeping (liquid oozing out) and beading (drops of sugar syrup forming on the surface). Possible causes include cooking on a humid or wet day, failure to dissolve the sugar, undercooking or baking at too high a temperature.



CHRISTMAS CAKE BOMBES ALASKA

Fruit cake gives this classic meringue dessert a festive twist. The cake rounds and ice cream scoops can be prepared a day or two before needed.

Rich dark fruit cake
Good-quality vanilla ice cream
2-3 tablespoons Cointreau or rum
Meringue:
4 egg whites
Pinch of salt
125g caster sugar

Line an oven tray with baking paper and place in the fridge or freezer to chill.

Cut six 6cm rounds from 1cm-thick slices of Christmas cake. Wrap in plastic wrap and place in the fridge.

Roll 6 scoops of ice cream a little smaller than the Christmas cake rounds and place on a lined dish. Loosely cover with plastic wrap and return to the freezer.

Meringue: Beat egg whites with salt to soft peaks. Gradually add caster sugar and continue to beat to stiff peaks.

Spoon meringue into a piping bag with a 1cm plain nozzle.

To assemble, place cake rounds on the chilled oven tray, drizzle with a little Cointreau or rum and top with the ice cream scoops. Working quickly, pipe meringue around bombes to resemble a cone shape. Using a knife, flick the meringue to form peaks all over.

Lightly caramelize using a blowtorch, or place in an oven heated to 230°C and bake for about 3 minutes until meringue just starts to brown. Serve immediately. Serves 6 ■





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BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS

Inspiration for lovers of *architecture, food and flowers*



Small House Living

CATHERINE FOSTER

Penguin, \$50, 208 pages, softback

As aspirant homeowners come to grips with the new reality of rocketing construction costs and land prices, it's hardly surprising to find an increasing interest in small-scale, cost-effective and environmentally sound alternatives. It's



a pleasure to read the stories behind *Small House Living's* 20 varied, often beautiful homes (one third of which are architect's own homes), and learn something about the engaged, enquiring minds that shaped them. The buildings include permanent dwellings and baches, seaside escapes and urban nests, even a glassy, Mondrian-framed Pete Bossley-designed artists' retreat

cradled in the Titirangi bush. Six homes are to be found in Auckland but the others criss-cross the country from Great Barrier to Taranaki

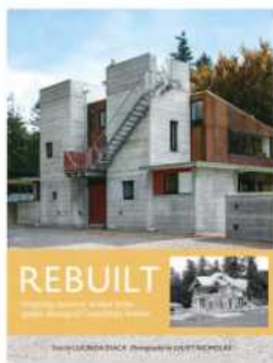
and Southland. And, despite the understandable ubiquity of plywood (cabinetry, storage, walls, ceilings...), they reflect a diverse range of influences. Among my favourites, an elegant Japanese-style 50sqm looking out over Wellington's Island Bay and a modest 65sqm Douglas fir-clad Governors Bay studio whose purity of line demonstrates (like many other examples in the book) some of what can be done in domestic architecture without decorative detailing. *Jan Chilwell is NZ H&G's sub-editor*

Rebuilt

LUCINDA DIACK & JULIET NICHOLAS

Penguin, \$45, 256 pages, softback

The austere, concrete and Corten steel lines of an Athfield Architects home feature on the cover of *Rebuilt*. It was commissioned by Jim and Louise Deans in December 2010 to replace Homebush, an imposing Edwardian brick homestead (featured in *NZH&G* in November 2000) that was destroyed in the first, September 2010 Canterbury earthquake. The two homes couldn't be more different aesthetically, yet, as Juliet Nicholas' photographs record, the new contemporary interior spaces still house 159 years of Deans family history: lovingly restored artworks, furniture and books. The Deans' brief to the architect: "looking to the future". It seems to sum up the spirit of so many of the homeowners interviewed for this



book: a sense of connection to their home, its history and its location, combined with a determination to claim back and even improve on what nature has taken from them. The story of each of the 19 homes – some historic, some new builds – is told, from the horrors of the quakes to the challenges and rewards of the rebuilding process, a period measured in years rather than months for most. Quite a few camped in the shell of their broken home, or at



least stayed close (one set of homeowners renting nearby held a party around their still intact pool; the owners of beautiful 1860s Loudon in Governors Bay fenced off the wreck of their home to hold *Sculpture on the Peninsula* 2011 in the grounds). *Rebuilt's* subtitle is "Inspiring stories from quake-damaged Canterbury homes" and it is indeed inspiring to see how many of these homeowners judge their "new" homes to be better and more beautiful than before. *Jan Chilwell*

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KIWI KAI: FOUR FABULOUS COOKBOOKS

Reviewed by NZ House & Garden food editor Sally Butters



Masu

NIC WATT

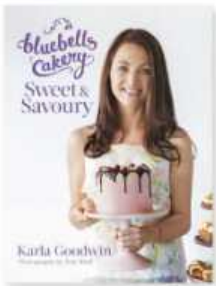
Allen & Unwin, \$59.99, 242 pages, hardback

If you enjoyed Nic's Japanese recipes in our October issue, this one's for you. Masu is his robata grill (Japanese barbecue) restaurant in Auckland. Perfection and dedication to detail are his trademarks but there are still plenty of simple dishes in this stunning book that are totally doable at home – soups, salads, sushi, sweet things, cocktails, family meals and, of course, brilliant barbecued food that is sure to impress.

Bluebells Cakery: Sweet & Savoury

KARLA GOODWIN

Random House NZ, \$50, 272 pages, hardback



Karla Goodwin is the talent behind Bluebells Cakery cafe and cake shop in Hillsborough, Auckland. Her creations are mainly traditional – beautifully

presented with a fresh, pretty, modern-vintage touch. From brunch, soups and condiments to muffins, slices and cakes, there's a wide range of sweet and savoury options here, plus some well-illustrated step-by-step instructions on various icing techniques. The perfect gift for a keen young (older teen and upwards) baker.



Homemade Happiness

CHELSEA WINTER

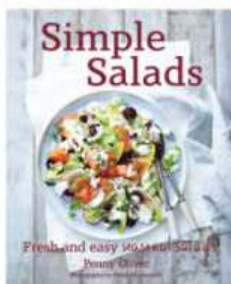
Random House NZ, \$50, 236 pages, softback

The *MasterChef* winner serves up more delicious, home-cooked goodness in this new collection that covers light meals, dinners, desserts, baking, children's lunches, nibbles and sides. From Swish Swedish Meatballs to Real Fruit Roll-ups, Chicken Fettucine to Chocolate Crackles, there's plenty on offer here to prompt smiles around the table. Ideal for someone with a young family who also enjoys relaxed entertaining.

Simple Salads: Fresh and Easy Seasonal Salads

PENNY OLIVER

Penguin, \$40, 160 pages, softback



Vegetables take centre stage in this fuss-free, useful and inspiring cookbook, with grains and pulses, pasta, noodles, meat

and fish playing supporting roles. There are tasty meals-in-a-bowl, such as Tangy Tuna and Greens, and super sides such as Spinach, Apple and Almond Slaw, plus many handy dressings. A great go-to book for summer and beyond. >

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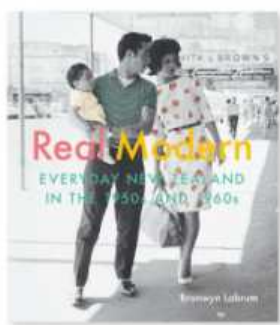
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Real Modern: Everyday New Zealand in the 1950s and 1960s

BRONWYN LABRUM

Te Papa, \$75, 432 pages, hardback

For a child of the 60s like me, this book is a delightful nostalgia trip. From the green and yellow Krinkle crêpe paper packaging (you'll remember it) that brought back memories of childhood Christmas crafts

to the *Paragon Bootie Book* (21 different patterns) that was my mum's go-to when a new baby was on the way, there are many "remember that?" moments to be had. *Real Modern* tells the story of two decades through photographs of hundreds of everyday objects, but the text makes the reader ponder the significance of those years. Was it a golden age of egalitarianism and well-being or a stodgy era when women were stuck at home doing the dishes and the country closed for the weekend? Recommended as a gift book for those who lived through these years – there's plenty to reminisce about. *Rosemary Barraclough is NZ H&G's Garden's deputy editor*

Carole's Flower Truck

CAROLE BOWDEN

PHOTOGRAPHS GRETA KENYON

Bateman, \$50, 208 pages, hardback

Now you don't need to be lucky enough to live in the vicinity of Carole Bowden's bountiful Remuera, Auckland flower truck to get the benefit of her devotion to fresh flowers, simply but inventively presented in all their glory. *Carole's Flower Truck* is on message, from its commitment to locally grown flowers



changing with the seasons to its beautiful posies, bouquets, circlets and garlands, all lushly photographed

by Greta Kenyon. There are tips on choosing vases and handling cut flowers and, perhaps most useful of all, a seasonal guide to NZ flowers. *Jan Chilwell*

Indoor Green: Living with Plants

BY BREE CLAFFEY

Thames and Hudson, \$55, 206 pages, hardback

There's something touchingly offbeat about this exploration of the homes and thoughts of people who adore indoor plants. Mostly made up of interviews with pot plant aficionados and images of the objects of their affection, it's written by Bree Claffey of Mr Kitly, a Melbourne store with a Japanese aesthetic and many, many indoor plants. There are ideas about interesting plants to collect and plenty of practical tips. Did you know

your begonia will do better sitting on a saucer of pebbles? They like humidity but not wet feet it seems. And the thriving specimens profiled will induce serious fiddle leaf fig envy among the green-fingered. This book's real charm comes from the plant devotees' thoughts on the significance of growing things. "When I have plants around I do not feel alone. I feel more connected and at one with the universe," says artist Tomoyasu Konuma. *Rosemary Barraclough* ■



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▲ BAKSANA

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▲ STARSHIP

Wallace Cotton's latest Starship fundraising tea towel, "Pink Lemonade for Starship", is a summery vision of lemons and vines, created by former Starship patient Ruby Seeto. Tea towels are available from Wallace Cotton stores or www.wallacecotton.co.nz for \$10, with \$6 from every sale supporting New Zealand's national children's hospital. The ultimate feel-good gift.



▲ CORSO DE' FIORI

Add a little luxe to your life with Baobab's limited-edition Jungle Python candle collection (shown in Burmese and Royal Blue). Encased in sophisticated leather and inspired by the shimmer of snakeskin, the spicy and earthy notes of the scent evoke an elegantly wild glamour. \$259.90 each. www.corso.co.nz

➤ TRENZSEATER

The Gustavia Exterior Lantern, with a twisted rope handle, is the perfect Christmas gift for outdoor entertaining this summer, in a nickel-finish marine-grade stainless steel. Available in different sizes in store at TRENZSEATER and online at www.trenzseater.com



▲ HARVEY FURNISHING

Harvey Furnishings' exclusive Terra Firma Collection has an eclectic, international look and covers a broad range of cushion covers, floor cushions, throws, bags, aprons and more. A perfect gift and amazing value at half price until Christmas. See www.harveyfurnishings.co.nz/homeware/terra-firma-collection

▼ MOISTURE MIST

Beauty Cake Classic Trio (RRP\$45) is full of Moisture Mist timeless sellers. For a flawless look, use Moisture Mist BB Cream to create a smooth base and combine with Beauty Cake for a natural high-definition finish. Lastly, add shine with Moisture Mist Lipsheen.



▲ FRENCH COUNTRY

Un Deux Trois by French Country Collections has a range of unique gift ideas for Christmas, from nautical-inspired brass key rings to cut-glass paperweights, photo frames, home fragrance and more. Pop in store at 6 Jervois Rd, Herne Bay, (09) 376 7588, or shop online at www.undeuxtrois.nz

➤ HOMELANDZ

Wow! Looking for a gift that does that? This fabulous shiny red urn and plinth is available from www.homelandz.co.nz online garden and gift shop. There are a variety of colours to choose from – it's also in black, grey, stone and white. Your jaw will drop when you see the amazing prices for these incredible pieces. Don't delay and visit www.homelandz.co.nz or call 0800 626 500 >





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Our January issue is the perfect holiday companion, filled with dreamy, summer-loving homes from Auckland's Waiheke Island (above) to Riverton in the deep south (below). On our food pages you'll find tropical food ideas for easy entertaining, a delicious Mediterranean menu and an index for all our 2015 recipes. To help you plan a great year ahead, every magazine comes with a free NZ House & Garden calendar.



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